THESIS

ESL WRITING CONFERENCE: EXPECTATIONS AND REVISIONS IN THE SUBSEQUENT DRAFT

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

ESL WRITING CONFERENCE: EXPECTATIONS AND REVISIONS

IN THE SUBSEQUENT DRAFT

Although the area of L2 feedback has been widely investigated (eg, Ferris, 2004; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Goldstein & Conrad, 1990), there has been little research examining students' expectations of writing conferences and their uptake in subsequent drafts. These issues need to be further studied since they could promote better writing conferences and create a better understanding between instructors and students. The purpose of the present study is threefold: 1) to gauge ESL students' expectations towards writing conferences, 2) to determine types of feedback students received during one-on-one writing conferences, and 3) to examine students' uptake in subsequent drafts. Employing a mixed-methods design, data was collected using surveys and interviews to examine students' (n=29) expectations before and after each writing conference that took place between instructors and students. The results showed that students expected their instructor to focus on content and organization the most, followed by the expectation that the conference would make them feel that their instructor cared about them as an individual. In addition, most students successfully took up the feedback they received into their subsequent draft. The findings suggest that prior to a conference, students should be informed of what they are expected to do during a one-on-one discussion since students from different cultural backgrounds can have different perspectives towards personal interaction with their teacher.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents who have always supported me and inspired me to reach a higher level of success. I also dedicate this to my brother-in-law who was always helping me with the thesis and willing to offer suggestions throughout the entire process.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Chapter

There is a growing number of ESL students in the United States. According to U.S. News & World Report Education (Haynie, 2014), from 2000 to 2014, the number of international students in the U.S. has increased 72 percent. These students come to the U.S. to experience new cultures and learn English, which they believe is the most influential language in the world. Ross (2016) presented data of international students at U.S. colleges, showing that in the 2014-2015 academic year, almost 5% of the international students came to United States with the expectation to develop their language skills in an intensive English program. Those who wish to pursue higher education have to provide their standardized test scores, proving that they are proficient in all four English skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Furthermore, the CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writer (2014) states that some second language writers might face difficulties in adapting to North American English since "the nature and functions of discourse, audience, and rhetorical appeals often differ across cultural, national, linguistic, and educational contexts." Zinsser's article (2009), mentions that students from different countries around the world have different perspectives on what good writing is. What is considered good writing in their first language might not be good writing in English. Therefore, it is important for international students to immerse themselves in English writing patterns so that they can produce good English writing pieces. Composition teachers need to understand their second language writers in terms of their characteristics, their languages, and their cultures, and develop writing courses and programs that are "sensitive to their linguistic and cultural needs" (CCCC Statement of Second Language Writing and Writer, 2014).

It is also important to note that in order to enhance ESL students' abilities in English writing, teacher feedback plays an important role in student improvement. Oral and written feedback can benefit students in their learning. For instance, feedback is a tool to help students learn from their mistakes. Whether it is implicit or explicit feedback, students can learn from the errors they make on their writing assignments and revise them to make a better writing piece. Without feedback, it would be difficult for students to recognize their mistakes and improve their writing. As Hattie and Timperley (2007) mentioned, "feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement, but this impact can be either positive or negative" (p. 81). The drawback of providing feedback can come from the teachers themselves. If teachers correct all grammatical errors in students' writings, it can discourage the students and decrease the students' confidence in their writing skills. As mentioned in Roothooft's study (2014), all of the participating teachers believed that their students had a strong desire for their teacher to correct their writing. However, some of the teachers were also aware of the possible damage to "students' confidence or other negative emotions as a result of feedback" (p. 71). Therefore, writing teachers should be aware of the amount of feedback they provide as well as the words they use.

As presented in previous research, a writing conference is one of the most powerful feedback tools to help enhance the development of the writing ability in L2 writers (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Patthey-Chaves & Ferris, 1997; Williams, 2004). In addition, previous research has revealed that most students are satisfied with one-on-one writing conferences (Eckstein, 2013; Kaufka, 2010; Liu, 2009) because they provide the opportunity for students to ask questions and discuss their drafts individually.

One-on-one writing conferences have been implemented in classrooms to help develop students' ability in writing and encourage them to be active learners (Haneda, 2004). According to Goldstein and Conrad (1990), one-on-one writing conferences can promote interaction and negotiation between a student and a teacher and they also allows for "on-the-spot clarification of difficult issues" (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005, p. 203). It is an informal instruction in which "conversational ends often merge with instructional ends" (Sperling, 1990, p. 318). Feedback given through writing conferences can be seen as a powerful method to understand student writers and make them understand themselves as writers. Although writing conferences have been proven effective (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997; Ferris & Hedgecock, 2005), it does not necessarily mean that students will produce successful subsequent revisions. However, it can be effective in improving students' ability to understand teacher's feedback, enhancing students' confidence in their writing skills, and motivating them to make revisions in the subsequent drafts (Xiang & O'Loughlin, 2008). In addition to benefiting student writers, writing conferences benefit composition instructors in the sense that instructors can "understand student writers' intentions and offer more useful feedback" (Yeh, 2016, p. 39). However, the research in this field rarely focuses on student uptake and their perceptions towards conferences. Students' voices on writing conferences have been the missing link in the research base to date. There have been surveys of students' perceptions on teacher written feedback and their uptake after receiving written feedback, but only rarely have students' expectations and their uptake after writing conferences been utilized in studies on feedback.

Previous research suggests that the focus of writing conferences centers on the interaction between teacher and student and how students revise their drafts after receiving feedback. However, this study specifically sought to investigate students' expectations towards writing

conferences, the feedback they received during conferences, and their uptake in the subsequent drafts.

Although there is little research investigating students' views towards writing conferences, those studies that have been conducted have yielded favorable results (Kaufka, 2010; Saito, 1994; Yeh, 2016). For instance, a study conducted by Saito (1994) showed that adult ESL learners preferred oral teacher feedback over peer feedback. Warner's research (1998) also found that students rated tutorial feedback as the most beneficial writing feedback, while multiple-draft systems and peer reviews were rated as the second and third most beneficial feedback methods, respectively. Furthermore, Kaufka (2010) conducted a study on student perceptions of required student-faculty conferences and found that the majority of the students agreed that the conferences would help them feel that their instructor cared about them as an individual and it would encourage them to stay on task and do their coursework. In addition, students in Yeh's study (2016) viewed writing conferences as helpful because it provided an opportunity for them to "receive individualized instruction by asking all the questions they need for revising and improving writing" (p. 51). Apart from those perceptions mentioned above, Liu's study (2009) also revealed that most of the students desired a close relationship with their teacher and the one-on-one interaction provided this opportunity. Similar findings were reported by Yeh's research (2016) indicating a high percentage of students (94%) claimed that writing conferences provided an opportunity for a good interaction with the teacher and it helped them feel relaxed during the conferences.

The present study has three main purposes. The first is to examine students' expectations towards one-on-one writing conferences in order to determine whether their expectations are met after participating in the conferences. The second purpose is to explore the types of feedback

students receive during one-on-one writing conferences to determine which types of feedback the instructors and students focus on the most during the conferences. Lastly, the third purpose is to investigate students' uptake of their teacher feedback in order to determine to which degree students take up the feedback into their subsequent draft, and whether those revisions result in successful revisions. As mentioned earlier, students' voices on their expectations and their uptake of oral feedback have largely been ignored in the research base to date. Since there is a growing number of writing instructors who employ writing conferences in their classrooms and ESL learners who come to the US to develop their English skills, there is definitely a need for this line of research. Understanding students' expectations and the way they revise their drafts will help teachers create a more effective writing conference and provide students with the opportunities to develop their writing skills based on their personal discussions with their teachers.

Outline of the Remainder of the Thesis

In what follows, I first review the literature on teacher written feedback and one-on-one writing conferences (Chapter II). Then the discussion of data and methodology is presented in Chapter III. After that, the results and the discussion of the study are presented in Chapter IV. Then, implications and limitations of the study together with ideas for future research are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous researchers have investigated the influences of feedback on student learning. Different types of feedback have proven effective, such as teacher electronic feedback, peer feedback, and oral feedback. However, there is no evidence on which feedback type is the most powerful and beneficial one for second language writers. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), to make feedback effective, teachers should "make appropriate judgments about when, how, and what level to provide appropriate feedback" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 100). Among all feedback mentioned above, writing conferences have become part of writing classes in many schools in North America. However, it has not been widely used in other countries. The use of writing conferences in ESL and EFL writing classrooms has proven effective (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Gilliland, 2014; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997) and it is important for instructors to understand the benefits of writing conferences so that they can successfully implement this feedback into their writing classes. This chapter will review the literature relating to writing conference in both L1 and L2 contexts. The review includes previous research on feedback practices in writing classes, as well as uptake and the impact of uptake. It also includes studies of oral feedback, interaction during conferences, and students' expectations towards one-on-one writing conferences.

Teacher Written Feedback

Feedback Practices. Keh (1990) defined feedback as "input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision" (p. 294). A more recent definition of feedback was given by Hawe, Dixon, and Watson (2008), who described it as an important interaction between teacher and student to enhance students' learning. There are many feedback strategies that writing teachers use to comment on students' papers. Examples include

marginal commentary, end commentary, and initial commentary. According to Ferris and Hedgcock (2005), marginal commentary made it easy for students to respond to the comments and apply them to the text, while end commentary could "bring together major themes to educate the writer about particular types of content or rhetorical issues" (Goldstein, 2004, p. 75). Moreover, initial commentary also helps students to identify their textual problems and students could "learn not just for the current draft but also for future writing" (Goldstein, 2004, p. 75).

Apart from those strategies mentioned above, McMartin-Miller (2014) also examined instructors' practices on selective and comprehensive error treatment. She found that selective error treatment could be challenging for instructors since some students might "underestimate their part in responding to it" (McMartin-Miller, 2014, p. 29). However, ESL writing instructors tended to use this practice over comprehensive error treatment. In her study, McMartin-Miller (2014) investigated three instructors and 19 students of a first-year ESL composition course, noting the errors that ESL instructors marked in student writing assignments. The first instructor mainly gave feedback on content and organization on the first draft, and on the second draft, she marked every error occurring in the first paragraph, but left the rest of the paper unmarked. Instead, she provided her students with marginal comments indicating an error type or a grammatical rule. She also commented on content and organization on the second draft during one-on-one writing conferences. This instructor found that a comprehensive approach was better than a selective approach because it allowed her to "determine what the patterns of error types are and then share those patterns with students" (McMartin-Miller, 2014, p. 28). On the other hand, the second instructor based her feedback on a selective approach. On the first draft, she provided feedback only on content and organization. Moving to the second draft, she used a selective approach to mark errors throughout the draft. She did not include any grammatical rules

in her written feedback; instead, she addressed those issues in writing conferences. This instructor used a selective error treatment because she believed that students sometimes rely too much on instructor feedback. Using this approach could encourage students to "closely read her comments and consider patterns in their errors" (McMartin-Miller, 2014, p. 29). Regarding the third instructor, he started off by marking errors on the first draft; however, he did not provide the correct form or clue to the error. He always provided a marginal comment or a final note if that student made the same grammatical/syntactical mistakes throughout the draft. He also mentioned those error patterns in writing conferences. Although this instructor used a selective approach multiple times, he claimed that this approach could also be "overwhelming if many errors are marked" (McMartin-Miller, 2014, p. 30). As a result, he had to adjust the amount of feedback based on students' perceptions. For example, if he sensed that students would feel frustrated by his feedback, he would back off a bit. McMartin-Miller (2014) concluded that although these three instructors used different strategies in marking student drafts, all of them avoided a comprehensive approach's weakness, which is the time to mark and correct all errors. She also pointed out that the partially comprehensive approach that was used by the first instructor could assist instructors to determine the most frequent error types found in students' writings, and it could help instructors create a lesson to meet students' needs.

Although there are many approaches for ESL/EFL instructors to use to comment on students' work, there is no conclusion as to which error treatment is the best approach. As Ferris (2014) mentioned, "there is no shortage of practical and specific advice for instructors of L2 writers on how best to provide or facilitate feedback in their classes" (Ferris, 2014, p. 9). Marginal comments could make it easier for students to understand their mistakes, while end comments could help instructors to understand students' weakness and create a lesson to assist

students with each specific grammatical rule. Moreover, instructors could also consider combining comprehensive and selective approaches since these two approaches have their strengths and weaknesses. Using other alternative approaches could be useful as well.

Uptake and Impact of Feedback. Most of the studies on teacher feedback and learners' uptake were conducted from teacher written feedback (Ene & Upton, 2014; Ferris, 1995; Liu, 2008), not a one-on-one writing conference. Therefore, to gain a better understanding of the relationship between teacher feedback and students' uptake, previous studies of teacher written feedback were taken into consideration.

According to Lyster and Ranta (1997), uptake is "a student's utterance that immediately follows the teacher's feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher's intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student's initial utterance" (p. 49). Similarly, Loewen (2004) viewed uptake as "the student's attempt to incorporate that information into his or her own production" (p. 155). Many previous studies looked at students' uptake of teacher written feedback. For instance, a study conducted by Liu (2008) looked at direct and indirect feedback provided to ESL learners to investigate if these two feedback types showed different effects on morphological (verb tense, plural ending, subject-verb agreement, etc.), semantic (word choice, preposition, omitted phrases, etc.), and syntactic (run-ons, fragments, word order, etc.) development in students' subsequent revisions. Liu (2008) explored the effects of error feedback in second language writing in 12 ESL learners who were taking a college composition class at the time the data were collected. Students were randomly divided into two groups: the first group received direct feedback, while the second group received indirect feedback from the teacher-researcher. Students' two drafts of the first essay and their first draft of the second essay were collected. To analyze and compare students' drafts, Liu (2008) calculated a measure of

errors per 1000 words. Admittedly, the teacher said that even though she provided the comments on both content and other error feedback, most of her feedback was on grammar and usage. However, she did not provide the reasons behind this. Also, it is important to note that even though there were three categories of error types being examined in this study (morphological, semantic, and syntactic), the syntactic errors were not considered useful because there was minimal agreement between the two raters.

Liu's study (2008) revealed that students from both groups showed a slight decrease in morphological errors. On the first draft, the number of morphological errors in group A was 17.4 per 1000 words; however, this error was reduced to 13.6 on the second draft. Similarly, the number of morphological errors in group B was 16.1 per 1000 words; however, in the second draft,12.3 errors were found per 1000 words. Both groups showed an average reduction of 3.8 morphological errors per 1000 words. However, an obvious difference between the two groups can be seen from the semantic errors they made across the two drafts. The number of semantic errors on group A's first draft was 20.7 per 1000 words, with a decrease to 15.3 in the second draft. This showed an average reduction of 5.4 per words per 1000. In contrast, the number of semantic errors in group B was 15.7 per 1000 words, and this error was reduced to 13.8, showing an average reduction of only 1.9 errors. A possible explanation is that it is easier for students to correct their morphological errors as long as they know the grammatical rules. On the contrary, semantic errors can be difficult for students since English is their second language and finding the right words and phrases to use in a sentence can be very challenging.

While Liu's (2008) study only emphasized students' uptake on morphological, semantic, and syntactic errors, Ferris (1995) revealed that students also received a good amount of feedback on other aspects of their essays, such as content and organization. Her study, which was

conducted with ESL students in writing classes, included close-ended surveys that were administered to 155 ESL students during the tenth week of a 15-week semester. The surveys were analyzed using a Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed-Ranks test to investigate differences between students' responses on their preliminary drafts and final drafts. The results revealed that 79% of the preliminary and final drafts received feedback on grammar, while 72% received feedback on organization, 70% on content, 62% on mechanics, and 52% on vocabulary. It is important to point out that although students received the most comments on grammar, there was not a great deal of difference in the percentages of comments on grammar, content, and organization. Furthermore, 67% of the students in Ferris' study (1995) reported that they paid the most attention to teacher feedback on their grammar; however, 63% of them also reported that some attention was given to content-oriented feedback. This demonstrated that students perceived the importance of both grammar and content-oriented feedback.

Unlike previous studies that examined the uptake and impact of teacher written feedback, Ene and Upton (2014) analyzed the feedback students received electronically to see if it resulted in successful revisions. They investigated 12 ESL learners in ESL college composition courses who received teacher electronic feedback. Two drafts and the final version of the first writing assignment, as well as one or two drafts and the final version of the second writing assignment were collected. A coding sheet describing the types of teacher electronic feedback in this research was developed from previous studies on written teacher feedback (Baker & Bricker, 2010; Dekhinet, 2008; Ferris, Pezone, Tade & Tinti, 1997). The coding scheme was categorized based on the focus of teacher feedback (content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, and writing process) and the manner that the feedback was given to students (direct vs. indirect, explicit vs. implicit, corrective or negative vs. non-corrective). To find out the numbers of each

feedback and uptake subcategory, the average scores were calculated, and paired t-tests were employed to investigate whether there was a statistically significant difference between the first and the second writing after students received each type of feedback.

The results revealed that students successfully revised their drafts on their first assignment at the rate of 69.6%; however, the successful uptake on students' second assignment was significantly lower, at a rate of 49.3%. A plausible explanation could be because of "the increased complexity of the writing assignments and teacher expectations" (Ene & Upton, 2014, p. 86). When looking at teachers' feedback in each category, the results revealed the highest percentage of teachers' focus was on content (42.6%), while 15.8% of the feedback was equally given to organization and grammar, and only a small percentage was on vocabulary (9%) and mechanics (10%). Furthermore, when looking at students' uptake, the results revealed that, overall, there was a high percentage of successful uptake, at an impressive rate of 62.3%, with the highest rate of students' responses to the feedback on grammar (75%). Students' successful uptake on content during their first writing assignment was quite high, at a rate of 70.3%; however, on their second assignment, only 53.1% of the feedback on content was successfully implemented. This suggests that "when teachers provide less feedback on a certain aspect, especially a complex one like content, the quality of the students' overall response may decline" (p.86).

Although the results of this study cannot be generalized due to the small number of participants, Ene and Upton (2014) do provide explicit guidelines for how to analyze teacher feedback and learner uptake. Specifically, their coding scheme for teacher electronic feedback focused on both higher-level concerns and lower-level concerns, which benefits my study in terms of analyzing and grouping teacher feedback during conferences.

To conclude, as previous research has shown, students tend to take up the feedback they receive into their drafts. Whether that feedback concerns higher-level orders or lower-level orders, students seem to rely on their instructors to correct their errors. However, it is important to note that too much feedback can overwhelm students and discourage them in their writing. As a teacher, it is important to make certain that feedback is appropriate, encouraging students to develop better writing skills, not become overwhelmed.

One-on-One Writing Conferences

Oral Feedback. Although teacher written feedback has proven effective in many ESL/EFL contexts (Ferris, 1995; Liu, 2008; Montgomery and Baker, 2007), oral feedback also shows a tremendous success in helping learners improve their writing skills. Previous research (Lee, 2013; Lyster & Mori, 2006; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster, 2002) has shown that language teachers frequently use recasts as a form of oral corrective feedback to reformulate "all or part of a student's utterance minus the error" (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 46). For instance, Lee (2013) examined types of corrective feedback and learner repair in 60 advanced-level ESL adult learners. Results from questionnaires, follow-up interviews, and classroom observations showed that teachers in advanced-level adult ESL classes used recasts the most, at the rate of 48.94% of the seven corrective feedback types (explicit correction, recast, clarification request, meta-linguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition), followed by explicit correction (38.38%), clarification request (11.27%), repetition (1.06%), and elicitation (0.35%). When looking at learner repair, it was found that recasts led to 92.09% repair, followed by clarification requests (90.63%), and explicit correction (85.32%). However, it is interesting to note that although the teachers in this study frequently used recasts the most (48.94%), students revealed that they preferred explicit correction since it was "the most effective and successful method to improve

their oral skills and proficiency; through this feedback, they believed, they could correct their errors quickly and directly" (Lee, 2013, p. 226). In contrast, students least preferred clarification requests because they were "vague and unclear corrections" (p. 226). The study also showed that clarification requests discouraged students from engaging in the conversations since it made them feel uncomfortable and made them think that the teacher did not understand their speech or was not paying attention to what they were talking about.

Similar results can be found in Roothooft's study (2014) which investigated the types of oral corrective feedback adult EFL teachers used. There were 10 EFL teachers in Spain who participated in this study. Teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their views towards oral corrective feedback. The questionnaire consisted of questions about the importance of correcting oral errors, the numbers of errors that should be corrected, and the types of errors that teachers should focus on when correcting students' mistakes. The researcher also observed one or two of each teacher's classes and corrective feedback episodes were coded into seven different types: (1) explicit correction, (2) recasts, (3) clarification requests, (4) metalinguistic feedback, (5) elicitation, (6) repetition, and (7) teacher's translation of students' utterance in the L1. Results showed that recast was the most frequent type used by the teachers, accounting for 65.3% of the total feedback moves, followed by explicit correction (10%) and elicitation (10%). A possible explanation of why most teachers in the previous studies preferred recasts over the other feedback types could be because recasts are "less disruptive and more indirect than prompts such as elicitation or metalinguistic feedback" (Roothooft, 2014, p. 74). Since teachers care about their students' emotional well-being, they tend to rely on recasts (What does it mean? Connection between recast and emotion?) when providing oral feedback.

After receiving oral feedback, students usually made revisions on small-scale issues over substantial-scale issues. For instance, Williams (2004) investigated the connection between the interactions occurring in writing conferences and the revisions made by L2 writers. Participants included three Chinese students, one Korean, and one Khmer learner. All students were required to participate in a writing conference with a tutor. Transcripts were coded for episodes of suggestions from the tutor, directives, and writer's requests for assistance. After the conferences, an interview was held for each individual participant. They were asked to watch the videotape of their own conference and discuss some aspects with the researcher. Students' drafts were analyzed using T-units and were categorized into three groups: 1) "same" refers to T-units that remained unchanged from the first to the second draft, 2) "small-scale changes" refers to the slight changes occurring in the second draft, and 3) "substantially changed" refers to changes in the clause level or larger. The results revealed that it was easier for students to revise small-scale features than substantial-scale features.

Looking at students' subsequent drafts, 69% of student uptake was on grammar comments, while 77% was on lexicon suggestions. Williams (2004) stressed that topics explicitly mentioned by the tutor were more likely to be revised than those that were implicitly mentioned during the conferences. This result is also supported by Lee's study (2013), mentioning that explicit corrections could help students "recognize their errors and mistakes clearly, to get quick error correction, and to identify the best and most accurate solutions to their errors" (Lee, 2013, p. 227). Furthermore, Williams (2004) pointed out that when writers took down suggestions, those suggestions were more likely to appear in their subsequent draft. In contrast, if writers resisted suggestions and showed non-verbal backchannel such as nodding or maintaining eye contact, related revisions were not likely to appear in the subsequent draft.

Similarly, Telceker and Akcan (2010) found that students tended to revise their grammatical mistakes over their content and organization errors. Telceker and Akcan (2010) examined how teacher oral feedback affected students' revisions on language and content. They collected three drafts from each of 16 students in an EFL context in Turkey. Students' first drafts and final essays were analyzed and compared to investigate whether students made any changes after they had received teacher feedback. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to compare students' first drafts and final essay. The results of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test confirmed students' significant improvement in grammatical accuracy across their second drafts and final drafts ($p < 0.05$). The results revealed that of all revisions students made after receiving teacher oral feedback, the highest revision was on grammatical mistakes, accounting for 55.5% of the overall feedback, while a small revision was given to content and organization, accounting for 44.3%. Telceker and Akcen (2010) concluded that "the conferences had a significant effect on the grammatical improvement of the students' texts but only a marginal effect on content-related revisions" (p. 43). Although the results in Telceker and Akcen's study (2010) generally agree with those obtained in previous research (eg, Liu, 2008; Montgomery & Baker, 2007), it is not demonstrated conclusively that students made successful changes on both grammatical and content levels. Further discussion could center on which grammar or content-related topics students paid the most attention to and resulted in successful revisions. This discussion could assist composition instructors to shape a more successful writing conference as well as more successful written comments on students' drafts.

Overall, oral feedback can result in students' successful revisions if teachers know when and how to provide the right feedback types. Recast tends to be the most frequent feedback type used by many teachers since it is less disruptive compared to other feedback types. However,

using other feedback types, such as explicit correction, could result in more successful revisions since it makes it easy for students to understand what errors they make and how to correct their errors directly. However, ESL teachers should be aware of students' different cultural backgrounds and their social circumstances, which could affect the efficacy of oral feedback. For example, as mentioned in Abdulkhaleq's study (2013), international students tend to over-respect their teachers and that can result in being afraid to disagree with their teachers, or they might "prefer to keep silent in the face of pressing problems with their work" (Abdulkhaleq, 2013, p. 33). Therefore, understanding students' cultures could help promote a better conference and avoid unpleasant circumstances.

Interaction in Writing Conferences. Most previous studies on writing conferences focused on the relationship between negotiation framework and students' revision drafts (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Haneda, 2004, Young & Miller, 2004). The interaction between teacher and student during a one-on-one conference can have an impact on how students improve their draft. One of the most popular studies in this field was conducted by Goldstein and Conrad (1990), investigating if students applied the knowledge of what was discussed in the conferences to the subsequent draft, and the relationship between the role of negotiation of meaning and students' revisions. Participants were three students from Vietnam, Iran, and the Philippines. Each student attended a 20-minute writing conference. The teacher did not read students' drafts prior to the conference; therefore, students were expected to come up with the issues they wanted to discuss. To find out how the discourse was structured and the roles of participants in the conference discourse, the researchers looked for recurring patterns and variations across students. To analyze the conference data, seven features were identified and coded: episode, discourse structure, topic nomination, invited nomination, turns, questions, and negotiation.

The results of Goldstein and Conrad's (1990) study revealed that the amount of conversational work that the students produced during the conference affected the degree of discourse structure used in the conference. For example, the episodes where the teacher did more work than the student (teacher initiated questions and student answered, and teacher talked and student backchanneled) were found most frequently with the Filipino and Iranian students, which accounted for 60.60% and 50% of the time, respectively, while the Vietnamese student only produced this discourse structure at the rate of 14.28%. Discourse structure where students did more of the work, such as when students initiated questions and the teacher answered, never happened in the Filipino student's conference. In contrast, this structure occurred 8.33% of the time in the Iranian student's conference, and 14.28% of the time in the conference with the Vietnamese student.

Goldstein and Conrad (1990) suggested that when the negotiation had taken place during the conference, all students performed a higher percentage of successful revisions. In contrast, when students did not negotiate meaning, they tended to make revisions mainly on mechanical or sentence-level issues. According to Goldstein and Conrad (1990), before doing a one-on-one conference with ESL learners, teachers should explain the role of conference discourse and how it is different from classroom discourse to students. Since ESL learners come from different cultural backgrounds and classroom contexts, it is the teacher's responsibility to make students feel comfortable during the conference and assure them that they can ask questions and initiate conversation at any time.

Similarly, Jacob and Karliner (1997) found that active learners had a tendency to successfully revise their draft more than passive learners after attending the writing conferences. Jacob and Karliner (1997) investigated the types of verbal interaction during writing conferences

and the relationship between verbal interaction and two of the students' subsequent drafts. The students' first and second drafts were collected for the analysis. The results revealed that in the first conference with Carol, one of the participants in this study, the conference was full of stumbling utterances and false starts; however, she showed sophisticated revisions in her second draft. On the contrary, a conference with the second student, Michael, was very orderly. The instructor asked good questions, and the conference went well. However, his subsequent draft did not show substantial changes, resulting in unsuccessful revisions.

According to Jacob and Karliner (1997), one plausible explanation between these two different conferences could be because of "the way the participants perceived their roles in each conference" (p. 502). In Carol's conference, the student did as much talking as the instructor; she perceived the conference discourse as a casual conversation where students could initiate the topics anytime. However, this was not the case in Michael's conference where the instructor did most of the talking. Therefore, it can be inferred that students can efficiently revise their drafts when they are active participants who ask questions and initiate topics during conferences. As Gilliland (2014) notes, students' active participation could lead to uptake in their subsequent draft since students "become co-constructors of knowledge with their teachers rather than passive recipients of information" (p. 317).

Although Jacob and Karliner's study (1997) focused on the relationship between verbal interaction and students' subsequent drafts, it provided some insight into what makes a successful revision. For instance, if students are active during conferences, they tend to make successful revisions in the subsequent drafts. However, it is important to ensure that teachers give students some time to think and generate their thoughts about the comments they just received. As Jacob and Karliner (1997) stressed, writing instructors should "…be able to

recognize the point at which all talk about sentences, paragraphs, and diction should stop and the student should spend his time generating thoughts" (p. 504). Furthermore, the findings of Jacob and Kaliner's study help to provide insight into why some students take up the focused revisions discussed during their conference into their subsequent drafts, and why some students ignore those discussions.

Additional research has pointed to a relationship between writing conference discourse and student revisions as well as how students' cultural differences affect instruction during a conference. For instance, Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997) looked at student participation in a one-on-one writing conference. Participants included four writing instructors, four strong students, and four weaker students. Six of the students were ESL learners; the remaining two were native speakers of English. Four texts were collected and analyzed: students' first drafts, students' revised drafts, the first draft of the following assignment, and transcripts of conferences. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this study. The results showed that all eight participants revised their papers to make them more suitable for their academic writing class. During the conferences, stronger students spoke more than weaker students, and weaker students barely initiated during the conferences, usually relying on back-channeling, such as *okay*, and *uh-huh*. When looking at how the conferences affected the revisions, the results revealed that weaker students usually followed teacher's suggestions on making their revision and revised only at the surface level, while stronger students showed more substantial revisions. Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997) suggest that composition instructors frame their conferences and make them relevant to their teaching topics in class. The conference should not just be "a free-form discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of a given paper" (p. 86).

Overall, research on interaction in writing conferences tends to provide information on how the roles of students during the conference could affect their subsequent draft. It is reasonable to conclude that students who are proactive in their conferences tend to be more successful in revising their draft since they are not afraid to ask questions about their writing, which could lead them to be a more successful writer. In contrast, passive students who wait for their teacher to initiate the conversation and remain silent tend to be less successful in developing their writing skills. However, it is important to note that using English in casual conversations like a one-on-one writing conference can be difficult and challenging for some ESL students who are not confident with the language. Therefore, instructors should be aware of their interaction with both high- and low-level language learners. Informing students of what you want them to do before and during the conference can decrease students' anxiety and help them become more active during the discussion. It is also important to note that writing conferences can go smoothly when both teacher and student have the same goals and freely exchange ideas.

Expectations in Writing Conferences. Students' expectations can influence how they react during a writing conference. Some students might expect their instructor to lead the conversation; in contrast, some students might prefer to be the one who asks the questions and leads the conversation. Students' expectations on the writing conferences have been observed in many ESL classrooms. For example, Liu (2009) investigated the expectation of ESL students in college writing conferences. The study compared the expectations between NS (n=65) and NNS (n=45) students regarding conferences by using a questionnaire and an interview. The surveys were administered to participants at the beginning of the semester, and the interviews were conducted with 18 students before their conferences.

Liu's (2009) results showed that both NS and ESL students expected their instructor to provide suggestions on how to improve their drafts. However, there was a considerable difference on whether students expected to share their own ideas. The majority of the NS students, 66.2%, expected to discuss about their intention and meaning in their essay with the instructor, while only 42.2% of ESL students had this expectation. In contrast, 66.7% of ESL students showed a high expectation for grammatical error correction, while only 43.1% of NS students expected their instructor to correct all grammatical errors. A possible explanation for these findings is that ESL students expected their instructor to point out all the grammatical errors since "they are well aware that they are not proficient English academic writers" (Ferris, 2007, p. 168). Liu's (2009) research provides valuable insight into the expectations for writing conferences of NS and NNS students, as it is one of the few studies that examines students' expectations and perceptions towards writing conferences.

Another study on students' expectations towards writing conferences was conducted by Kaufka (2010), who investigated first-year student perceptions towards student-faculty conferences. ESL first-year students (n=52) were required to meet twice during the semester for writing conferences. After two conferences, students were asked to fill out a multiple-choice survey relating to their perceptions towards the conferences. The results showed that students had positive opinions about the conferences, with 92% of them indicating that the conferences made them feel the teacher cared about them as individuals and 82% of the students agreed that the required conferences should be continued. In addition, 71% of them believed that the conferences helped enhance their reading and writing skills. Moreover, the study showed that students value a personal relationship with their teachers. As Kaufka (2010) explains, "good teaching and high quality interactions with faculty promote growth, and the more contact

students have with their teachers, the better" (p. 32). Kaufka's (2010) study is particularly important, as her survey serves as a model for what is used in the present study. Her survey, relating students' perceptions towards conferences, was clear and covered many important aspects concerning this topic such as what students want to focus on during conferences and how students would benefit from writing conferences.

While Liu (2009) and Kaufka (2010) investigated students' perceptions towards writing conferences, Eckstein's (2013) study further analyzed how student conference feedback preferences differed based on their language proficiency level and how teacher response practices changed when working with students at different levels. Eckstein's (2013) research included survey responses from 14 writing teachers and 546 international students from all English proficiency levels. Teacher data was gathered from questionnaires which required the teachers to reflect on each round of writing conferences. They were asked to reflect on four items: 1) positive outcomes of the conference session; 2) difficulties for each set of conferences; 3) ways their impressions might affect their teaching, and 4) feedback for the writing program administrator. The results revealed that teachers' expectations largely fell into 3 major categories: (1) I expected to discuss student writing (13.6%); (2) I expected to instruct the students individually (11.4%); and (3) I expected to get to know the students (10.7%). Regarding students' responses, their data was conducted from a survey consisting of closed and open-ended questions asking students about the writing conference program. The results showed that low-level proficiency students thought that conferences were useful when teachers focused on local feedback. However, high-level proficiency students preferred feedback on global issues.

While most studies examined students' expectations on writing conferences in ESL contexts (Eckstein, 2013; Kaufka, 2010; Liu, 2009), Yeh (2016) attempted to investigate

students' attitudes towards writing conferences in an EFL context. With two teachers and 34 undergraduate students from college composition classes in Taiwan, the data from questionnaires and personal interviews revealed that the highest expectation EFL students had towards the writing conference was expecting the teacher to tell them how to revise their essays, accounting for 91%. Following that expectation, 82% of the students expected to ask their teacher about their writing problems, and 79% of them expected to discuss their writing with the teacher. The results also revealed that the majority of the students perceived the conference as a helpful and successful method in their writing class. Only a few students had doubts about the benefit of writing conferences due to a lack of belief in teacher feedback. Many students believed that writing needed a lot of self-practice and that writing conferences could not help them to improve their writing skills.

It is important to note that ESL and EFL students might have different expectations towards a one-on-one writing conference; therefore, composition instructors should be aware of this issue when working with students from different cultural backgrounds. Although the studies above reported students' favorable experiences towards writing conferences, to create a successful conference, it is the responsibility of both instructor and student to make certain that their expectations of the writing conference align with one another.

Statement of the Problem

Most of the research on writing conferences has focused on interaction framework (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Haneda, 2004; Jacob & Karliner, 1997), and the relationship between the first and second draft as a whole (Patthey-Chaves & Ferris, 1997; Telceker & Akcan, 2010; Williams, 2004). Little research has emphasized the focused revision topics during a conference that students take up in the subsequent draft.

To fill the gap shown in the previous research regarding other types of feedback students might seek after attending conferences, I decided to focus only on the revisions that are mentioned during the conference, and not revisions as a whole. When students revise their draft, there is a high probability that students might revise it based on teacher feedback and other feedback they seek outside of the classroom; for example, some of them might visit a writing center or ask a friend to help with grammatical mistakes. Therefore, when comparing students' first and second drafts to examine whether writing conference feedback results in successful revisions, optional feedback that students seek outside of the conference needs to be taken into consideration.

In addition, previous research has largely ignored the importance of students' expectations and perceptions towards a one-on-one writing conference. As an ESL/EFL learner and teacher in training, I have a belief that knowing what students expect from a conference will help enhance the effectiveness of that writing conference. Furthermore, understanding students' expectations towards writing conferences also assists writing instructors to structure the conference to meet students' needs. The instructors could also effectively manage the time to make students get the most effective feedback within that limited time. Therefore, this study investigates this issue in more depth. The following questions are examined in the present study:

1. What are students' expectations towards a writing conference? Do students' expectations change after that conference?
2. What kind of feedback do ESL learners receive during a one-on-one writing conference?
3. To what extent do students take up the revisions from the conference into their subsequent drafts?

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Again, this study has three main areas of focus: 1) to examine students' expectations and perceptions towards a one-on-one writing conference, 2) to investigate the types of feedback students received during a one-on-one writing conference and 3) to examine students' uptake of teacher feedback in the subsequent draft. Chapter 3 discusses the instruments and procedures used in this study to address the goals listed above. First, the design and setting of the study are presented. Following this, information about the participants is provided, as well as the procedures used to collect and analyze the data for the present study.

Design

This study employed a mixed-methods design. Quantitative data was collected to determine the number of focused revisions and students' uptake, as well as their expectations and perceptions towards a one-on-one writing conference. In addition, qualitative data was collected, as it "relates to understanding some aspects of social life and its method which (in general) generate words, rather than number, as data for analysis." (Patton & Cochran, 2007).

Setting

Data collection was conducted at a large public university in the U.S. Two first-year College Composition classes (ESL sections) were chosen for this study. The course focused on "critical reading and inquiry and enabling effective writing processes for a variety of rhetorical situations" (College Composition Syllabus and Policy Statement Spring, 2016). Prior to taking this class, international students had to pass a basic Academic Writing class, or have a SAT verbal/critical reading score of 600 or above, ACT COMPOSITE score of 26 or above, or a Direct-Self Placement Survey score of 15. According to the syllabus and policy statements for the College Composition course, students were expected to:

1. Develop critical reading practices to support their research and writing.
2. Develop an understanding of writing as a "rhetorical practice", i.e. choosing effective strategies to address their purpose and audience.
3. Learn important elements of academic discourse, such as posing and investigating questions, using sources effectively and ethically, and writing effective summaries, analyses, and arguments.
4. Increase their information literacy through strategies for locating, selecting and evaluating sources for inquiry.
5. Develop effective research and writing processes, including peer collaboration and response and using feedback to guide revision

At the time of the data collection, students from both sections were working on their academic argument essay which was worth 25% of their final score. They were asked to focus on one stakeholder group (e.g., university students, the President of the university) as their audience and write an academic argument paper about an issue to convince their targeted audience. Students were expected to demonstrate their ability to effectively support a claim with well-researched reasons and evidence. While both classes were the same in terms of the genre of the essay they had to compose, they did differ slightly in that students from section 1 were asked to bring in their first draft to the writing conference, while students from section 2 were only asked to bring an outline. Since writing conferences were conducted at the busiest time of the semester, some students from section 1 were able to complete their first draft, while some could not. Students from section 2 were asked to come to the conference with a detailed outline of their paper. They were also required to prepare three questions to discuss during the conference and fill out their conference preparation sheet before attending the conference (see Appendix A).

Participants

Instructors. As mentioned above, there were two participating sections, taught by two different instructors: James and Jill (pseudonyms). Both instructors are native English speakers and had some experience with teaching university composition classes prior to this study. James was in his final semester of his master's degree in Teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language. He had been teaching composition for two years. He had also taught survival English for adults for two years. He had done writing conferences with students before and this was his sixth class employing writing conferences in his classroom.

Jill was in her second year of the joint MA program in Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Cultures and English TESL/TEFL Specialization. She had taught English at the high school level for two years in Mexico, and also at the pre-school level for two years. She had taught composition for two years and this semester was her first semester teaching composition to international students. This was her first time in doing writing conferences with international students.

Students. Overall, there were 31 ESL students who participated in this study (15 students from section 1 and 16 students from section 2). Their ages ranged from 18 to 24 years old (M = 19.81, SD = 1.58). All students were asked to fill out the demographic information on the first page of the pre-conference survey (Appendix B). The first part of the survey asked about students' age, native languages, academic level and their English proficiency score. Students were from 10 different countries: China, Malaysia, India, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Italy, Sweden, and Brazil. They represented seven different languages: Chinese (19), Malay (1), Malayalam (1), Arabic (7), Italian (1), Swedish (1) and Portuguese (1). Their academic levels varied from freshman to senior, with 15 freshmen (48.38%), 10 sophomores

(32.36%), 5 juniors (16.13%), and 1 senior (3.23%). All students had met the minimum English language proficiency requirement for admission into mainstream classes.

Data Collection

This study was conducted in ESL composition classrooms, an instructor's office, and the study areas in the university. The data collection took place over the last four weeks of a 15-week semester. Since feedback and revisions were considered an important part of the composition class, the individual writing conferences were implemented as part of the coursework. The main methodology for collecting data included surveys, one-on-one writing conferences, and interviews. Table 1 provides an overview of the data collection process.

Table 1

Overview of Data Collection Procedures

Data Collection	Participants	Place
Pre – conference surveys	29 ESL students	Classrooms
Pre – conference interviews	5 ESL students/ 2 instructors	Study area/ In front of an instructor's office/ Instructor's office
One-on-one writing conferences	31 ESL students	Study area/ In front of an instructor's office
Post – conference surveys	29 ESL students	Classrooms
Post – conference interviews	2 instructors	Instructors' office

Surveys. At the beginning of the semester, the surveys were given to two participating instructors and they administered the surveys to their students in their classrooms. The

instructors were asked to inform their students about the purpose of the study and emphasize that participation was voluntary.

A pre-conference survey was administered to students to examine their expectations towards the writing conference (see Appendix C). The survey consisted of three parts. The first part concerned students' demographic information. The second part asked about students' experiences with the feedback they received in their writing class. Lastly, the third part asked about students' expectations towards the writing conferences. Students filled out the survey, which took approximately 10 minutes, before attending the conference. They wrote down their names so that a connection could be made between their pre-conference survey and their post-conference survey. Students were informed that their information would be kept anonymous.

After all students attended their scheduled writing conference, a post-conference survey was administered to the students in the classrooms by their instructor (see Appendix D). The survey was administered after students completed their second draft, not right after the conference. The purpose of doing this was to give students some time to think about whether the conference helped them in writing their second draft. It was a closed-ended survey concerning students' perceptions regarding their experience with their conference. The survey was adopted from Kaufka (2010), who investigated first-year student perceptions of required student-faculty conferences. The survey took approximately five minutes to complete. After students completed the survey, the instructors collected the surveys and gave them to the researcher. It is important to note that although there were 31 students, two of them did not complete the pre- and post-conference surveys. As a result, there were only 29 students whose surveys could be used.

Cronbach's Alpha reliability estimates, which indicate how closely related a set of items are as a group, were calculated for both pre-conference surveys and post-conference surveys.

Cronbach's alpha for the 13 items from pre- and post-conference surveys were 0.869 and 0.888, respectively. According to Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010), if all of the scale items have high covariance, at a rate of 0.7 or more, it means that those items show high reliability and measure the same underlying concept. Therefore, the alpha coefficients for this study were considered to be adequate.

Interviews. Interviews were conducted in order to elicit more answers from students about their expectations towards their writing conference. Interviews were conducted with five students prior to the conference: three students from section 1 and two students from section 2. These students were randomly chosen based on their availability before attending their conference. All interviews were conducted in front of the instructor's office and in the study area while students were waiting for their individual conference. All interviews were audio-recorded and each took approximately 5 to 10 minutes. The interview questions can be found in Appendix E.

Before and after the conferences, I also interviewed the two instructors to examine their perceptions towards the conferences. They were asked a series of questions. It was an informal conversational interview allowing instructors to describe their feelings towards the conferences. The interviews were conducted in a study room and took about 5 to 7 minutes. They were audio-recorded. The interview questions for pre-conference and post-conference can be found in Appendices F and G.

Writing Conferences. Writing conferences were conducted outside of the classrooms. Students in James' section were asked to come to their conference with their first draft. All of James' conferences took place in his office and lasted from 10 to 22 minutes (M = 16.03, SD = 4.14). In contrast, students in Jill's section were asked to come to their conference with their

detailed outline. All of her conferences took place in a study area. Students were also asked to prepare three questions relating to their writing to discuss with the instructor. Jill's conferences lasted from 10 to 40 minutes ($M = 20.52$, $SD = 9.13$). In both sections, an audio-recorder was placed between the instructor and student during the conferences.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The data was categorized into three phases: pre-conference phase, during-conference phase, and post-conference phase.

Pre-Conference Phase. A 5-point Likert-scale was used to analyze students' pre- and post-conference surveys. Each response was given a number as follows: Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly disagree = 1. To analyze the data, individual question was calculated by giving each question a value, then those values were added together to create a score for every question. Mean and standard deviation score were calculated for each item. Following that, a paired sample *t*-test was used to compare individual pre- and post-conference surveys. Then, each question from the pre- and post-survey was given a name. For example, *Pair 1* refers to the comparison between pre-survey question 1 and post-survey question 1, while *Pair 2* refers to the comparison between pre-survey question 2 and post-survey question 2. Overall, 13 comparisons were made. It was hypothesized that students' expectations towards the one-on-one writing conference would positively change after students participated in the conference. The null hypothesis for each comparison was that there would be no differences between students' expectations prior to the conference and their perceptions after the conference. By standards of the study, the result would be statistically significant when the *p*-value was less than 0.05.

Students' pre-conference interviews and instructors' interviews were used as part of the qualitative discussion to gain a more in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives towards their writing conference. The interview transcripts were transcribed and listened to twice to search for the recurring themes. Regarding students' pre-conference interviews, there were two recurring issues that were discussed: 1) things they would like to discuss with their instructor, and 2) the benefits of one-on-one writing conference. Regarding instructors' pre-conference interviews, there were three issues that were mentioned: 1) how they were going to organize the conference, 2) their expectation for students to be prepared and engage in the conference, and 3) things they would like to discuss with their students. However, the interview data was not statistically analyzed.

During-Conference Phase. Regarding the conference data, 31 conferences were audio-recorded. All recordings were listened to twice. However, when it came to the drafts, only 26 students' drafts were analyzed. They were transcribed and coded by the researcher to find out which focused revision topics were discussed during the conferences. Teacher oral feedback that consisted of multiple statements was divided into small sections and was coded separately. The decision on how and when the statements should be divided was based on the shift of the focus or characteristic of the feedback. For example, during James' conference with one student, his statement was:

> Let's look at the overall organization first. 'How to improve the situation in college' is a straightforward subtitle, and I don't understand exactly what it means. This one I need to read a couple of times to understand what it meant. It's a good strategy if your first one is said, "situation in college…", then this would make more sense. But it is helpful to have subtitle in very similar format. Otherwise, it's sort of feel disjointed.

The above statement was divided into two small sections. The first part *("How to improve the situation in college" is a straightforward subtitle… what it meant.*)

was coded as content clarity, while the second part (*It's a good strategy if…*) was coded as subheading.

The focused revision topics examined in this study were adapted from Ene and Upton's coding categories of teacher electronic feedback in an ESL composition class (2014). Ene and Upton developed their coding scheme based on studies relating to teacher written feedback (Baker & Bricker, 2010; Dekhinet, 2008; Ferris et al., 1997). Their coding scheme was divided into two levels: the discourse level and the form level. The discourse level includes content, organization, coherence, and cohesion; the form level includes vocabulary, grammar, syntax, morphology, and mechanics. Since the focus was on the revision topics, not on the overall quality of the essay, five categories were left out from Ene and Upton's (2014) scheme: Cq (overall quality of content), Oq (overall quality of organization), Vq (overall quality of vocabulary), Gq (overall quality of grammar), and Mq (overall quality of mechanics).

The coding scheme for this study was developed during the coding session. While listening to the audio recordings, I looked for recurring patterns that were not included in Ene and Upton's (2014) scheme. For example, sub-headings (Osub) and abbreviation (Ma) were topics that were mentioned many times during the conferences; therefore, these two topics were added to the coding scheme. In addition, Md (documentation or attrition) from Ene and Upton's (2014) scheme was not included because this feature was viewed as being part of citation. Since citation was one of the topics that had been frequently discussed during the conferences, citation (Ci) and other sub-topics relating to citation (Cia, Ciart, Ciat, Cih, and Cip, and CiPage) were also added to the coding scheme. The coding scheme can be found in appendix H.

To maintain the interrater reliability, 15 conference transcripts were also coded by a second person, who had a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics from a university in Australia

and had worked as a composition instructor in a Thai university for 8 years. In the initial coding phase, the coders obtained an agreement coefficient of 88% for the data set. We then discussed the codes on which we disagreed and came to 96% agreement on the final classification.

Post-Conference Phase. After coding the conference transcripts, students' first drafts were compared to the coded transcripts in order to examine those places in the drafts that were mentioned in the conferences as needing revisions. Then, the percentages of the focused revision topics in students' first drafts were calculated to find out which topics were discussed the most during the conferences.

After the process on revision coding was completed, student uptakes on the second drafts were coded to examine the degree to which those revisions were taken up by students in their subsequent writing. Students' first and second drafts were compared to examine students' uptake. I was aware that many other revisions might occur in the students' subsequent drafts. However, I limited myself to examine only those revisions discussed in the conferences. During this process, the same second coder was asked to code 15 students' drafts on their uptake. Before the second coder had begun the process, he was familiarized with the coding scheme and was given a few sentence samples to refer back to each focused revision. The coder and I obtained an agreement coefficient of 90% coding the uptake in the data set. We then discussed the codes on which we disagreed in a coding session and came to 99% agreement on the final classification. To examine to which degree students took up the revisions into their subsequent draft, the percentage of each revision topic taken up by the student was calculated to find out which topic showed the highest percentage. Students' and instructors' interviews were used as part of the qualitative analysis in this case.

To determine whether the uptake was successful, I went back to look at students' drafts. This time the focus was on successful and unsuccessful revisions. Successful revisions refer to instances when the students perceived the feedback point from their instructor and created a stronger writing following that feedback. On the contrary, unsuccessful revisions refer to revisions in which the writer perceived the feedback point but failed to make adequate revisions. Then, the percentage of each successful and unsuccessful revision was calculated to examine the degree to which teacher oral feedback successfully helped students improve their subsequent drafts. Table 2 provides a summary of all coding phases.

Table 2

A Summary of Coding Phases

Phase	Analysis	Description
Pre-conference	surveys and interviews	• Using a 5-likert scale, each response was given a number as follows: Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly disagree = 1. • The numbers representing students' responses were calculated using the SPSS program for paired samples *t*-test statistics. • Mean averages were also compared for each question for the pre- and post-survey. • The result was considered statistically significant when the *p*-value was less than 0.05.
During-conference	writing conference audios	• All 26 conferences were transcribed and coded by the researcher to find out which focused revision topics were discussed during the conferences. • Their coding scheme was divided into two levels: discourse level and form level. A second coder was asked to code 15 transcripts. The agreement coefficient among two coders was 96%.
Post-conference	conference transcripts/ students' first and second drafts	• Student's first drafts were compared to the coded transcripts to examine those places in the draft that were mentioned in the conferences as needing revisions. • The percentages of the focused revision topics in students' first drafts were calculated to find out which topics were discussed the most during the conferences. • The percentage of each revision topic that was taken up by the student was calculated to find out which topic showed the highest percentage, indicating that students took up that topic the most.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter focuses on the results and discussion of the results for the present study. It is organized according to the research questions presented earlier. The first part of the chapter helps answer the first research question: What are students' expectations towards the writing conference? The data from the surveys is discussed first, followed by the findings from interviews for both students and instructors. The second part of this chapter helps answer the second research question: What kind of feedback do ESL learners receive during a one-on-one writing conference? The types of feedback that were provided to students during conferences are discussed. Finally, students' uptake on the subsequent draft helps answer the third research question: To what extent students take up the revisions during the conference into their subsequent drafts?

RQ1: What are Students' Expectations towards the Writing Conference?

Results of Paired Sample *T*-Test and Survey Data. A paired sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the pre-conference survey and post-conference survey regarding students' expectations towards the writing conference. The result of the paired samples t-test data on students' expectations towards the writing conference is found in Table 3. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Pair 1 refers to the comparison between pre-conference survey question 1 and post-conference question 1; this pattern is the same as Pair 2, Pair 3, and so on.

Table 3

Paired Sample T-Test Statistics

Questions	Pretest		Posttest		95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
	M	SD	M	SD				
Pair 1	4.24	0.87	4.72	0.45	-0.78, -0.18	-3.31	28	.003
Pair 2	4.45	0.74	4.55	0.69	-0.38, 0.17	-0.77	28	.448
Pair 3	4.34	0.77	4.41	0.87	-0.46, 0.32	-0.36	28	.722
Pair 4	3.62	0.98	3.93	0.92	-0.63, 0.01	-1.97	28	.059
Pair 5	3.14	1.03	3.28	1.31	-0.76, 0.49	-0.45	28	.654
Pair 6	4.62	0.68	4.69	0.47	-0.34, 0.20	-0.53	28	.602
Pair 7	4.21	0.77	4.52	0.51	-0.63, 0.01	-1.97	28	.059
Pair 8	4.21	0.86	4.34	0.77	-0.45, 0.18	-0.90	28	.380
Pair 9	4.00	0.76	4.31	0.81	-0.68, 0.06	-1.73	28	.095
Pair 10	3.38	1.08	3.97	0.98	-1.01, -0.16	-2.82	28	.009
Pair 11	4.24	0.79	4.41	0.87	-0.46, 0.12	-1.22	28	.232
Pair 12	4.00	0.89	4.03	0.91	-0.38, 0.31	-0.21	28	.839
Pair 13	4.21	0.77	4.45	0.69	-0.56, 0.07	-1.57	28	.129

Note: Alpha level equals .05

As displayed in Table 3, there was a statistically significant difference in the score for Question 1 in pre-conference survey ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.87$), and Question 1 in post-conference survey ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 0.45$) conditions, $t\ (28) = -3.313$, $p = 0.003$. Also, there was a significant difference between scores for Question 10 in the pre- ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.08$) and post-conference survey ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.98$) conditions, $t\ (28) = -2.822$, $p = 0.009$.

Although there were only two survey questions (out of 13) showing a significant change in students' expectations, it does not mean that the conference failed to meet students' expectations. When considering the mean scores, the results showed that the mean scores in the post-conference survey were higher than the mean scores in the pre-conference survey in every

survey question, meaning that students' expectations became more favorable after they had attended the conference. This is further supported by the percentage of responses in pre- and post-conference surveys. Table 4 provides the percentage of each survey question of pre-conference and post-conference surveys rated by 29 students.

Table 4

Students' Expectations on the Writing Conference

Expectations	Pre-Survey		Post-Survey	
	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
1. I think the conference will be worth my time.	79.31%	3.45%	100%	0%
2. The conference will make me feel that my instructor cares about me as an individual.	86.21%	0%	89.65%	0%
3. The conference will help me develop my writing skills.	82.76%	0%	82.76%	3.45%
4. The conference will help me develop my reading skills.	58.62%	10.34%	68.96%	6.90%
5. During the conference, I'm expecting my instructor to focus on grammar.	37.93%	24.14%	44.83%	34.48%
6. During the conference, I'm expecting my instructor to focus on content and organization.	89.65%	0%	100%	0%
7. The conference will motivate me to stay on task and do my coursework.	86.21%	3.45%	100%	0%
8. The conference will help me understand the course content I do not understand in class.	79.31%	3.45%	82.76%	0%
9. The conference will help me learn about other resources.	72.41%	0%	79.31%	0%
10. The amount of time I spend on homework for this course will increase because of the conference.	48.27%	27.59%	65.52%	6.90%
11. During my conference, I will be able to ask questions that I won't be able to ask during class time.	79.31%	0%	89.65%	6.90%
12. The level of my engagement in the course materials will increase because of my conference.	62.07%	0%	68.96%	3.45%
13. I think the conference is an important part of my learning in this course.	79.31%	0%	89.65%	0%

Note: The numbers of students who chose "strongly agree" and "agree" were combined, while students who chose "disagree" and "strongly disagree" were also combined.

As displayed in Table 4, three expectations that were most prominent prior to the one-on-one writing conference included: (1) the expectation for an instructor to focus on content and

organization (89.65%; (2) the expectation that the conference would make them feel that their instructor cared about them as an individual (86.21%); and (3) the expectation that the conference would motivate them to stay on task and do their coursework (86.21%). In addition, 82.76% of the participants believed that the conference would help them develop their writing skills. Among all students' responses, the factors students expected the least were: (1) the expectation to focus on grammar (37.93%); (2) the increasing of time to spend on homework for this course (48.27%), and (3) the development on their reading skills (58.62%).

After students had attended the conference, 100% of students agreed that the conferences were worth their time and motivated them to stay on task and do their coursework. Furthermore, all of them mentioned that, during the conference, their instructors focused on content and organization; only 44.83% of the students mentioned that their instructors focused on grammar. Moreover, 89.65% of the students believed that the conference made them feel that the instructors cared about them as an individual. They were also able to ask questions that they wouldn't be able to ask during class time, and they also agreed that the conference was an important part of their learning in this course.

When comparing pre-surveys and post-surveys, students' responses to 12 questions (i.e., 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13) reflected a more favorable attitude toward the conference. Only survey question 3 (*The conference will help me develop my writing skills)* remained unchanged. Students' expectations showed a significant change after the conference on survey question 1 (*I think the conference will be worth my time)*, and survey question 10 (*The amount of time I spend on homework for this course will increase because of the conference)*. Prior to the conference, 79.31% of the students expected that the conference would be worth their time; however, after the conference, 100% of them agreed that the conference was worth their time;

this showed an increase of 20.69% change in students' expectation. Similar to survey question 10, 48.27% of the students thought that the amount of time they spent on homework would increase because of the conference. However, after attending the conference, 65.52% mentioned that they did spend more time on their homework for this course; this showed an increase of 17.25%.

Some changes of students' expectation were seen in survey question 7 (*The conference will motivate me to stay on task and do my coursework*). Before attending the conference, 86.21% of the students expected the conference would motivate them to stay on task and do their coursework; however, after the conference all of them agreed that the conference encouraged them to focus on the task; this showed an increase of 13.79% change in students' expectation. Similar to survey question 6, showing that prior to the conference, 89.65% of the students expected their instructor to focus on content and organization; however, after attending the conference, all of them mentioned that their instructor emphasized content and organization, showing an increase of 10.35% change in students' expectation. In addition, question 4 (*The conference will help me develop my reading skills.*), question 11 (*During my conference, I will be able to ask questions that I won't be able to ask during class time*.), and question 13 (*I think the conference is an important part of my learning in this course.*) showed the same increase of 10.34% change in students' expectation, confirming that students had a more favorable attitude towards the one-on-one writing conference.

A slight change of students' expectations was seen in survey question 2, *The conference will make me feel that the instructor cares about me as an individual*, and survey question 8, *The conference will make me understand the course content I do not understand in class*. Prior to the conference, 86.21% of the students agreed that the conference would make them feel that their

instructor cared about them; however, after the conference, there was a slight increase of 3.44%, resulting in 89.65% of the students who agreed that their instructors did care about them as an individual. In addition, before attending the conference, 79.31% of the students thought that the conference would make them understand the course content they did not understand in class; however, after participating in the conference, there was a slight increase of 3.45%, resulting in 82.76% of students who did agree that they understood the course content more after attending the conference.

Discussion of Students' Expectations for the Writing Conference. In terms of the first research question, the finding relating to the expectation towards grammatical correction contradicts a number of other previous studies (e.g., Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Liu, 2009; Radecki & Swales, 1998), in which it was found that students had high expectation towards grammar correction. For example, this finding is in stark contrast with Liu's (2009) study which claimed that the majority of ESL students were mostly concerned with the accuracy of their writing; overall, 66.7% of the students in Liu's study expected their instructor to correct their grammatical mistakes during the conference. Also, in Eckstein's (2013) recent research on the impact of one-on-one writing conferences for L2 writers, his research demonstrated that lower-level students thought that the conferences were helpful when teachers focused more on grammar and mechanics than content and organization; however, the results were reversed for higher-level students; that is, they preferred feedback on higher-level concerns.

One possible explanation for this finding is that, at least for the present study, the instructors' expectations for the course were already well established by the time that the conferences occurred. That is, throughout the course of the semester, the instructors emphasized higher-order concerns (e.g., content and organization) in their writing courses, which resulted in

decreased focus on grammar issues for the majority of students. This fact is reflected in the following comments from James, the instructor from Section 1:

> I'm not worried about grammar at all because it takes such a long time to teach. My goal is for them to recognize how important their topics are and be humble and aware that there is a lot of information out there that they don't have yet, and for them to want to go find it online or at the library. I don't worry about grammar because native speakers make terrible grammar too. It doesn't affect their ability to succeed (Interview, April 20, 2016).

These findings might also be explained by the fact that these students were taking a high-level composition class; therefore, both instructors and students tended to emphasize on higher-order concerns than lower-order concerns. This could be explained by the previous studies, which indicated that high-proficiency language learners were more concerned with their content and the idea development of the essay (Cumming & So, 1996; Diab, 2005; Eckstein, 2013). As Eckstein (2013) mentions, learners' language proficiency can indicate feedback preferences. As a result, students in this present study had a tendency to place an importance on content and organization of the essay. As one interviewee from the present study stated:

> I don't expect my instructor to focus on grammar. I think we can figure out about the grammar later; it's not a big deal. I'm more concerned about the organization because it's the design of the structure of the essay (Interview1, April 22, 2016).

In addition, 86.21% of the students also expected that the conference would make them feel that their instructor cared about them as an individual, and the conference would motivate them to stay on task and do their coursework. Similar results were found in Kaufka's (2010) study, with 92% of students indicating that the conferences would help them feel that their instructor cared about them as an individual, and 81% believing that the conferences would encourage them to stay on task. These findings are in line with Liu's (2009) research, confirming that students value the one-on-one writing conference and the personal relationship that develops between a student and a teacher. As Liu (2009) explains, students desire a close relationship with

their teacher and the one-on-one interaction during a conference helps increase their confidence in talking to the instructor. The writing conference provides an opportunity for a good interaction with the teacher whereby they can relax during the conferences (Yeh, 2016).

The third expectation was the expectation that the conference would help them develop their writing skills, which accounted for 82.76%. This finding is supported by Ferris and Hedgcock's (2005) research which claimed that the majority of students valued teacher feedback and they considered the feedback as an important part of their writing development. Similar results were found in Telceker and Akcan's study (2010), confirming that the students believed that their teacher's feedback assisted them in improving their composition skills. Furthermore, a similar point was also made by Ferris (1995) indicating that 93.5% of the students perceived their teachers' feedback as a helpful way to improve their writing.

One possible explanation for this finding is that, at least for the present study, all participating students were ESL learners. They were aware that English was not their first language and they could make lots of mistakes in their writing. Therefore, they found their teacher's feedback as a useful and reliable tool to develop their writing skills. Although students could seek feedback outside of the classroom, for instance, feedback from a writing center or a friend, none of that feedback is as reliable as the feedback from their writing instructor. Since these ESL learners often viewed their instructor as a professional writer, there is no wonder why students expected that the conference with their instructor would help them become better writers. As indicated in Ferris' (1995) study, teacher's feedback "helped them know what to improve or avoid in the future, find their mistakes, and clarify their ideas" (p. 46).

Also, it is important to note that there was a positive change on attitudes towards writing conference feedback after students had attended the conference. Higher percentages and higher

average scores in each survey question confirmed that students' expectations were met. One possible explanation is that one-on-one writing conferences allow an instructor to address students' mistakes and center the discussion on the students' skill level. As stated by Burke (2012), conferencing allows an instructor to structure and individualize instruction to meet his/her students and to help them become a more successful writer. The positive change on attitudes towards the writing conference might also be explained by the fact that writing conferences allow students to talk about their ideas, which helps them develop analytical and critical skills. As mentioned by Bayraktar (2012), writing conferences should involve "predictable and focused discussion between teacher and students that allow students to generate their own ideas and solutions for their writing problems" (p. 710). The opportunity for students to speak up could result in a positive change of attitudes towards individual conferences after participating in a conference.

Overall, it was found that ESL students in the college composition class valued the importance of the writing conference and believed that the conference could help them become a better writer. While it was clear that the majority expected their instructors to focus on content and organization the most, the expectation to focus on grammatical issues was not as prominent among these students. The expectation on content and organization over grammatical issues can be explained by the instructors' intention to focus on essay development and the level of the composition class these students were taking at the time the data was collected. Since it was a high level composition class, idea development and essay organization were clearly more important than other issues such as grammar and mechanics.

RQ2 : What Kind of Feedback Do ESL Learners Receive during a One-On-One Writing Conference?

This section presents a summary of the results regarding the types of feedback students received during the conferences. The revision topics in this study were adapted from Ene and Upton's coding categories of teacher electronic feedback in an ESL composition class (2014). The results are presented based on the target of teacher feedback (content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, mechanic, citation, and audience).

Results of Teacher Feedback during the Conferences. Overall, there were 26 students (13 students from each section) whose conferences were recorded and could be used as part of the study. When comparing James' and Jill's conferences, the results showed that Jill spent more time during the conferences with her students, approximately 10 to 40 minutes for each conference ($M = 20.52$, $SD = 9.13$) than James did. However, the amount of feedback she gave to her students relating to the focused revision topics in this study was lower than James who only spent 10 to 22 minutes ($M = 16.03$, $SD = 4.14$) for each conference. The total instances of feedback that Jill gave to her students were 89, while James' feedback accounted for 176 instances.

When comparing the two sections, it was clear that James' conferences showed more varieties of the focused revision topics than Jill's. Mostly, the conversations between Jill and her students involved the assignment and how to generate ideas; therefore, it could be difficult for the instructor to focus on specific issues such as audience, citation, and, grammar. As shown in Table 5, while both James and Jill focused most of their time on content (45% and 58%, respectively) and organization (28% and 30%, respectively), James also focused on vocabulary,

citation, and audience, with a slight emphasis on grammars and mechanics, while Jill did not mention vocabulary and grammar at all during her conferences.

Table 5

Frequency of Feedback Instances

Focused revisions	James		Jill	
	N = 176	Percentage (%)	N = 89	Percentage (%)
Content	79	45%	52	58%
Organization	49	28%	27	30%
Vocabulary	11	6%	0	0%
Grammar	3	2%	0	0%
Mechanics	6	3%	4	4%
Citation	18	10%	4	4%
Audience	10	6%	2	2%

Feedback on Content. Table 6 provides an overview of the subcategories of feedback on content. It is obvious that both instructors mainly focused on idea development of the essay, which accounted for 48% of the overall content feedback, followed by the focus on example giving (25%), idea clarity (15%), counterargument (11%), and accuracy of information (2%). However, when considering each individual instructor, the results showed that James placed greater emphasis on clarity and understandability (19%), and example giving (27%) than Jill did. In contrast, only 8% of Jill's content feedback was on clarity and understandability, with 23% on example giving. On the other hand, Jill gave more importance towards idea development (56%) and counterargument (13%) than James, who focused only 43% of his content feedback on idea

development and 9% on counterargument. Accuracy of information received no attention from Jill, while 3% of James' content feedback concerned this issue.

Table 6

Subcategories of Feedback on Content

Feedback on content	James		Jill		Overall	
	N = 79	(%)	N = 52	(%)	N = 131	(%)
Clarity and understandability	15	19%	4	8%	19	15%
Development	34	43%	29	56%	63	48%
Accuracy of information	2	3%	0	0%	2	2%
Example	21	27%	12	23%	33	25%
Counterargument	7	9%	7	13%	14	11%

Feedback on Organization. The results showed that both instructors focused on idea placement the most, which accounted for 49% of James' organizational feedback, and 59% of Jill's organizational feedback. Following idea placement, James' feedback was devoted to sub-heading (16%), thesis statement (12%), paragraph order (8%), and quote introduction (8%), respectively, with minimal attention given to topic sentence (4%) and transition (2%). However, he did not emphasize on coherence and cohesion. In contrast, Jill tended to focus more on paragraph order (15%), thesis statement (11%), and topic sentence (7%), with minimal attention on sub-heading (4%), and coherence/cohesion (4%). She did not emphasize transition and quote introduction. When considering the overall feedback on organization, it is clear that both instructors devoted minimal time on transition (1%), coherence/cohesion (1%), quote introduction (5%), and topic sentence (5%). Overall, both instructors tended to focus more on

idea placement (53%), thesis statement (12%), and sub-heading (12%). Percentages of feedback on organization can be found in Table 7.

Feedback on Grammar. Overall, 33% of James' feedback instances were focused on sentence structure, while 67% were focused on verb tense. During conferences, James did not mention other subcategories on grammar such as, word order, preposition, or noun form. In contrast, Jill did not offer feedback on grammar at all. Percentages of feedback on grammar can be found in Table 8.

Table 7

Subcategories of Feedback on Organization

	James		Jill		Overall	
Feedback on organization	N = 49	(%)	N = 27	(%)	N = 76	(%)
Transition	1	2%	0	0%	1	1%
Thesis statement	6	12%	3	11%	9	12%
Topic sentence	2	4%	2	7%	4	5%
Sub-heading	8	16%	1	4%	9	12%
Coherence/cohesion	0	0%	1	4%	1	1%
Idea placement	24	49%	16	59%	40	53%
Paragraph order	4	8%	4	15%	8	11%
Quote introduction	4	8%	0	0%	4	5%

Table 8

Subcategories of Feedback on Grammar

Feedback on grammar	James		Jill		Overall	
	N = 3	(%)	N = 0	(%)	N = 3	(%)
Sentence Structure	1	33%	0	0%	1	33%
Omission	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Word order	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Verb tense or form	2	67%	0	0%	2	67%
Noun form	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Article	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Agreement	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Proposition	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Pronoun	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Feedback on Mechanics. Table 9 reveals that when both instructors provided feedback on mechanics, they typically focused on formatting and style, which accounted for 67% of the overall mechanic feedback instances in James' class, and 50% of the overall mechanic feedback instances in Jill's class. Feedback on spelling and abbreviation were each the target of 17% in James' class. In contrast, Jill did not comment on spelling and abbreviation; instead, she placed an emphasis on punctuation, which accounted for 50% of her overall feedback on mechanics.

Table 9

Subcategories of Feedback on Mechanics

Feedback on mechanics	James		Jill		Overall	
	N = 6	(%)	N = 4	(%)	N = 10	(%)
Punctuation	0	0%	2	50%	2	20%
Spelling	1	17%	0	0%	1	10%
Formatting and Style	4	67%	2	50%	6	60%
Abbreviation	1	17%	0	0%	1	10%

Feedback on Citation. As shown in Table 10, when looking at the overall feedback on citation, the largest percentage of the instructors' feedback was on attribution and credibility, which accounted for 50% of the overall feedback on citation. This was followed by feedback relating to article citation, which accounted for 23%. The focus on author tag and page citation accounted for 9% of the overall feedback on citation, followed by feedback on publication date (5%) and hanging indent (5%). However, when considering the feedback in each class, the results showed that the highest percentage of citation feedback in James' class was on attribution and credibility, which accounted for 61% of his overall feedback on citation. In contrast, the highest percentage of feedback relating to citation in Jill's class was on article citation, which accounted for 75% of her overall feedback on citation. While James showed minimal attention towards author tag (11%) and article citation (11%), Jill did not focus on author tag, attribution and credibility, publication date, and hanging indent. Page citation, publication date, and hanging indent were each at the focus of 6% of the citation feedback in James' class, while 25% of Jill's citation feedback was devoted to page citation.

Table 10

Subcategories of Feedback on Citation

Feedback on citation	James		Jill		Overall	
	N = 18	(%)	N = 4	(%)	N = 22	(%)
Author tag	2	11%	0	0%	2	9%
Article citation	2	11%	3	75%	5	23%
Attribution and credibility	11	61%	0	0%	11	50%
Page citation	1	6%	1	25%	2	9%
Publication date	1	6%	0	0%	1	5%
Hanging indent	1	6%	0	0%	1	5%

Discussion of Feedback Types during Writing Conferences. Previous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of writing conferences on students' subsequent drafts. However, Williams (2004) argued that in some cases "there appeared to be little clear connection between what went on in the writing conference and the subsequent draft" (p. 181). Although the current study did not examine conference discourse between the instructor and student, it does provide a clear connection between the feedback given to students during the conference and students' subsequent drafts.

Specifically, the results in the present study revealed that the highest percentage of the focus during the conferences in both sections was on content, followed by organization. Apart from those two focused revisions, James' attention was devoted to citation, vocabulary, audience, mechanics, and grammar, while Jill showed no interest towards grammar and vocabulary. In contrast, her comments were devoted to mechanics, citation, and audience. These

results reflect the findings from several other related studies which found that teachers' main focus on feedback in ESL college composition classes is typically on content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics, in that order (e.g., Ene & Upton, 2014; Ferris, 1995). For example, in Ferris (1995), it was reported that although teachers focused most of their feedback on grammar, which accounted for 79% of the overall feedback, they also focused on organization (72%), content (70%), mechanics (62%), and vocabulary (52%). Moreover, Ene and Upton (2014) suggest that composition instructors' main focus is usually on "the process-oriented approach to composition in which content is prioritized as a higher order concern over grammatical accuracy and mechanics, though the latter are not ignored" (p. 86).

One possible explanation for this finding is that the students in the present study were all ESL writers who had taken a basic college composition class or had a SAT verbal/critical reading score of 600 or above, proving that ESL writers in this study had some experiences in English writing. Those who got a SAT verbal score of 600 or above had proven that they were able to interpret data, apply reasoning skills, and provide evidence to support information in the texts. Also, having taken a basic composition class prior to this course helps students to emerge in an American English writing context since they were taught to summarize, analyze and evaluate texts. Therefore, knowing that these ESL learners had some experiences in English writing, it is possible that the instructors and the students had more concern for content and organization issues rather than grammar and mechanics in this course.

When further examining the subcategories of feedback on content, the results revealed that both instructors concentrated on idea development the most, followed by example giving, idea clarity, counterargument, and accuracy of information. The results generally agreed with those obtained in Ene and Upton's study (2014), confirming that "idea development was the

focus of most of the teachers' comments related to content in both courses" (p. 86). A plausible explanation would be that the ideas in the drafts students brought into the conference were not fully developed. Since students were required to write an argumentative essay in which they needed to "state and support a clear, debatable, focused claim" and use their research and writing skills to "convince an undecided audience to agree with their argument" (CO150.400 Assignment4, 2016, p. 1), it could be difficult for ESL learners to have a fully developed essay for their first drafts since English is not their first language and to be able to write in American writing standards could take years of practice.

Furthermore, a closer examination into the subcategories of feedback on organization showed that both instructors concentrated on idea placement the most, followed by thesis statement, and the discussion on sub-heading. However, they tended to give little attention towards transition, coherence/cohesion, quote introduction, and topic sentence. Part of the results of this study corresponds to Ene and Upton's study (2014), which demonstrated that "paragraph order and the organization of introductions received no attention, whereas, idea placement within body paragraphs and topic sentences received comparatively more attention" (p. 87). A plausible explanation might be found in the focus of the argumentative essay. In the assignment sheet that was handed to the students before they started writing the argumentative essay, it was stated that "the essay must use a balance of Logos, Ethos, and Pathos appeals that are appropriate for your audience" and "the essay must use subheadings to improve your organization" (CO150.400 Assignment4, 2016, p. 1). It could be difficult for ESL learners to balance their logos, ethos, and pathos in their essay because some of them might not be familiar with these rhetorical principles. Therefore, students probably needed some guidance about where and how to add the rhetorical features in their essay to create a strong argumentative essay.

Looking further into the subcategories of grammar, one instructor focused on verb tenses/forms the most, followed by sentence structure, while the other instructor placed almost no attention on grammatical issues. As mentioned earlier in this discussion, grammar-related topics were mentioned the least during the conferences in both sections since both instructors were more concerned with the development of students' ideas. Most students from Jill's class came to the conference with an outline; not surprisingly, simply working with an outline made it difficult for the instructor to comment on students' grammar. Furthermore, both instructors in this study shared the opinion that students should learn to self-edit to improve their grammar accuracy. This is a common view held by many experienced instructors; that is, students should be taught how to become independent learners (Ene & Upton, 2014).

Considering the subcategories of feedback on citation, both instructors concentrated on attribution and credibility the most since providing credits to the authors of each source and mentioning where all the claims come from are important in academic writing. The point that the instructors focused more heavily on attribution and credibility is likely due to the fact that plagiarism is seen as a serious issue in American institutions. Many ESL learners come to the US with limited knowledge in referencing and citing other's works. According to Adam's research (2015) on student perspectives on plagiarism, he claimed that many academic writing classes discuss plagiarism; however, many students are still confused about what plagiarism is and what they should do to avoid plagiarism. As Adam (2015) notes, "students express a desire for more information and support in the area of good academic writing skills" (p. 11), therefore, instructing students on how to attribute sources and how to write effective citations could be an effective way of ensuring that students are learning good academic writing skills.

Lastly, only a small percentage of focused revision was given to audience. Audience is viewed as an important component of an argumentative essay, as students need to consider "their audience's characteristics, expectations, needs, values, and interests in order to argue with them successfully" (CO150.400 Assignment4, 2016, p. 1). As mentioned in assignment sheet 4 (2016), "the more specific your audience is, the easier to write and more successful your argument will probably be" (p. 1). Even though both instructors did not focus heavily on audience, many conferences included a discussion of audience and how to frame the writing for a specific audience.

Apart from those focused revision topics, it is important to note that Jill's conferences were longer on average than James' conferences; however, Jill had less instances of feedback provided. A possible explanation could be that during the conferences, Jill and her students not only discussed about students' writing, but students also shared their personal lives such as, their marriages, and issues they were having in other classes. Moreover, Jill tended to speak more at-length about certain topics than James did. Since students in Jill's class came to the conference with detailed outlines, Jill had to make certain that students understood the ideas of what she was trying to say and could apply those ideas in the draft, which resulted in less instances of feedback provided to students during the conference.

To sum up, in terms of the types of feedback ESL students received during the one-on-one writing conference, this study revealed that the students received the most feedback on their content, specifically, their idea development, followed by feedback on organization concerning idea placement. However, the focus of the revisions were quite different in both sections. It can be concluded that when students participate in the conference with their first draft and know what their problems are in their writing assignment, the teacher and students tend to discuss in

more details about the specific essay and specific problems that are brought up during the conference.

RQ3: To What Extent Do Students Take Up the Revisions from the Conference into Their Subsequent Drafts?

This section presents a summary of the results concerning students' uptake of teacher's feedback from the one-on-one writing conference. First, information regarding students' uptake on each type of feedback is provided. As explained below, students' uptake was categorized into three categories: 'successful uptake' refers to instances when the students perceived the feedback point from their instructor and created a stronger writing following that feedback. On the contrary, unsuccessful uptake refers to revisions in which the writer perceived the feedback point but failed to make adequate revisions; and 'not follow' refers to the attempted revisions that were completely different from the intention of the teacher's feedback. Following that, a discussion of students' uptake on the subsequent drafts is provided.

Results of Feedback Uptake. Overall, there were 265 total instances of uptake for both sections, with 176 instances of uptake from James' section and 89 instances of uptake from Jill's section. Of all the feedback received, there was 32 instances of no uptake, with 22 instances of no uptake from James' section, and 12 instances of no uptake from Jill's section. It is important to note that the number of instances of feedback given to the students did not necessarily equal the number of instances of uptake. An example can be seen when a teacher suggested a student to title the sub-heading in the same format, in this case, sub-heading was counted as one feedback type. However, when looking at the student's writing, if the student had five sub-headings in his/her writing, and he/she made changes on all of the sub-headings, the number of uptake would be counted as five, while the number of feedback type this student received was

counted as one. Therefore, the number of instances of feedback and the number of instances of uptake cannot be compared in this case. The instances of uptake on sub-heading, author tag, article citation, attribution, and page citation fell into this scenario.

Table 11

Uptake and No Uptake on Each Feedback-Type for James' Section

Focused revisions		Uptake		No uptake		% of uptake/no uptake of each individual feedback
Feedback types	N	N=176	%	N = 22	%	
Clarity	15	14	8%	1	5%	93.33%, 6.66%
Development	34	30	17%	4	18%	88.24%, 11.76%
Example	21	17	10%	4	18%	80.95%, 19.05%
Thesis statement	6	5	3%	1	5%	83.33%, 16.67%
Sub-heading	11	10	6%	1	5%	90.90%, 9.09%
Idea placement	24	22	13%	2	9%	91.66%, 8.33%
Vocabulary	11	8	5%	3	14%	72.73%, 27.27%
Page citation	1	2	1%	3	14%	40%, 60%
Article citation	9	9	5%	0	0%	100%, 0%
Attribution	14	11	6%	3	14%	78.57%, 21.43%
Audience	10	10	6%	0	0%	100%, 0%

Note: This table only shows the feedback-type that occurred 5% or more for uptake and no uptake on students' subsequent drafts.

Table 11 shows that the highest percentage of uptake in James' section was on development, which accounted for 17% of the overall uptake, followed by idea placement (13%), and example (10%), respectively. However, when each instance of uptake was examined

separately, the results revealed that students did not take up the feedback on development the most. All feedback given on transition, sentence structure, spelling, abbreviation, hanging indent, publication date, accuracy of information, topic sentence, paragraph order, quote introduction, verb tense, formatting and style, and audience was all taken up by the students on their subsequent drafts.

Within each feedback-type, the highest percentage of uptake was on clarity; uptake occurred in 93.33%, followed by idea placement (91.66%), and sub-heading (90.90%), respectively. Uptake on the feedback concerning development was calculated as 88.24%. The lowest percentage of uptake within each feedback-type occurred for vocabulary (72.73%), attribution (78.57%), and example (80.95%), respectively.

In contrast, the percentages for no uptake were much less than for uptake. For example, page citation had the highest percentage of no uptake (60%), followed by vocabulary (27.27%), and attribution and reliability (21.43%). The lowest percentage of no uptake was on clarity (6.66%), idea placement (8.33%), and sub-heading (9.09%), respectively.

Table 12

Uptake and No Uptake on Each Feedback-Type for Jill's Section

Focused revisions		Uptake		No uptake		% of uptake/no uptake of each individual feedback
Feedback types	N	N = 89	%	N = 12	%	
Development	33	30	34%	3	25%	90.91%, 9.09%
Example	12	9	10%	3	25%	75%, 25%
Counterargument	7	6	7%	1	8%	85.71%, 14.29%
Topic sentence	6	6	7%	0	0%	100%, 0%
Coherence	5	5	6%	0	0%	100%, 0%
Idea placement	16	13	15%	3	25%	81.25%, 18.75%
Formatting and style	2	2	2%	0	0%	100%, 0%
Article citation	3	1	1%	2	17%	33.33%, 66.66%

Note: This table only shows the instances of uptake/no uptake with more than 5%.

Table 12 shows that the overall highest percentage of uptake in Jill' s section was on development, which accounted for 34% of the overall uptake, followed by idea placement (15%), and example (10%), respectively. All feedback given on clarity, thesis statement, topic sentence, sub-heading, coherence, paragraph order, punctuation, formatting and style, page citation, and audience was all taken up by the students on their subsequent drafts.

Within each feedback-type, the highest percentage of uptake was on idea development; uptake occurred in 90.91%, followed by counterargument (85.71%), and idea placement (81.25%), respectively. Uptake on feedback relating to example was calculated as 75%. Feedback that received the lowest percentage of uptake was on article citation, which accounted for 33.33%. In contrast, article citation had the highest percentage of no uptake (66.66%), followed by example (25%), and idea placement (18.75%). The lowest percentage of no uptake was on development (9.09%), and counterargument (14.29%), respectively.

Results of Revision Outcomes. To gain a better understanding of whether students successfully revised their drafts, students' uptake was analyzed to see if they performed a 'successful uptake', 'unsuccessful uptake', or they completely changed the text without taking teacher's feedback into consideration. Again, 'successful uptake' refers to students' attempt to revise their draft; they perceived the feedback point from their instructor and create a stronger writing following that feedback; 'unsuccessful uptake' indicates that the writer perceived teacher's feedback, but failed to revise it completely; and 'not follow' refers to the attempted revisions that were completely different from the intention of the teacher's feedback. Information on content is first presented, followed by students' uptake on organization, grammar, mechanics, citation, vocabulary and audience.

Content. Table 13 provides a summary of students' uptake of teacher's feedback on content from both sections. The average amount of students' uptake on content in James' class (M = 14, SD = 10.70) was slightly higher than the average amount of students' uptake in Jill's class (M = 9.8, SD = 11.76). In James' class, the students were successful in revising their content at an impressive rate of 86% (M = 12, SD = 9.38); however, in Jill's class, students' successful uptake was slightly lower, at the rate of 71% (M = 7, SD = 8.60). Overall, 80% (M = 9.50, SD = 8.89) of all uptakes across both sections was successfully implemented into students' subsequent draft. Some students were not successful in implementing the feedback; the total of unsuccessful uptake across both sections was at the rate of 15% (M = 1.80, SD = 2.30). The amount of unsuccessful students' uptake on content in James' class was accounted for 11% (M = 1.60, SD = 1.82) of the overall feedback, which was lower than those in Jill's class, which accounted for 20% (M = 2.00, SD = 2.92). The total of 5% (M = 0.60, SD = 0.97) of the overall uptake on content was implemented into students' subsequent drafts, showing revision attempts that were completely different from the teachers' intentions, with 3% (M = 0.40, SD = 0.55) of not followed suggestions occurred in James' class, and 8% (M = 0.80, SD = 1.30) occurred in Jill's class. Looking further into the subcategories of learner uptake on content, most of the successful uptake concerned idea development of the essay, which accounted for 43% in James' class, and 61% in Jill's class, respectively.

Table 13

Students' Uptake on Content

Instructors	Total Uptake		Successful Uptake		Unsuccessful Uptake		Not Follow	
	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%
James	14.00/10.70	59%	12.00/9.38	86%	1.60/1.82	11%	0.40/0.55	3%
Jill	9.80/11.76	41%	7.00/8.60	71%	2.00/2.92	20%	0.80/1.30	8%
Average	11.90/10.83	45%	9.50/8.89	80%	1.80/2.30	15%	0.60/0.97	5%

Organization. As shown in Table 14, 30% *(M* = 5.00, *SD* = 5.79) of student uptake was on organization. The percentage of students' uptake on organization in James' class was slightly higher than those in Jill's class, at the rate of 60% (*M* = 6.00, *SD* = 7.15) and 40% (*M* = 4.00, *SD* = 4.28), respectively. The results revealed that 84% (*M* = 4.19, *SD* = 4.93) of all uptakes across both sections was successfully implemented into students' subsequent drafts; 85% (*M* = 5.13, *SD* = 6.31) of students' uptake in James' class was successfully incorporated, while 81% (*M* = 3.25, *SD* = 3.20) of students' uptake on organization in Jill's class was successfully revised. The rate of unsuccessful uptake on organization in Jill's class was quite high, at the rate of 19% (*M* = 0.75, *SD* = 1.39), compared to James' section, which accounted for 13% (*M* = 0.75, *SD* = 1.39) of the overall uptake. However, when looking at the students' revision attempts that were completely different from the teachers' intentions, the results showed that only 2% (*M* = 0.13, *SD* = 0.35) of student uptake in James' class fell into this category, while none of the uptake in Jill's class fell into this category.

Table 14

Students' Uptake on Organization

Instructors	Total Uptake		Successful Uptake		Unsuccessful Uptake		Not Follow	
	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%
James	6.00/7.15	60%	5.13/6.31	85%	0.75/1.39	13%	0.13/0.35	2%
Jill	4.00/4.28	40%	3.25/3.20	81%	0.75/1.39	19%	-	-
Average	5.00/5.79	30%	4.19/4.93	84%	0.75/1.34	15%	0.06/0.25	1%

Grammar. As shown in Table 15, there was no uptake on grammar in Jill's class, simply because Jill did not give feedback on grammar at all. In contrast, the average amount of student uptake on grammar in James' class was calculated at 1.50, with successful students' uptake at the rate of 67% (M = 1.00, SD = 1.41), and unsuccessful students' uptake at the rate of 33% (M = 0.50, SD = 0.71).

Table 15

Students' Uptake on Grammar

Instructors	Total Uptake		Successful Uptake		Unsuccessful Uptake		Not Follow	
	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%
James	1.50/0.71	100%	1.00 /1.41	67%	0.50/0.71	33%	-	-
Jill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Average	0.75/0.96	1%	0.50/1.00	67%	0.25/0.50	33%	-	-

Mechanics. Table 16 provides the information on students' uptake of teacher's feedback on mechanics from both sections. The average amount of students' uptake on mechanics in James' class (M = 1.50, SD = 1.73) was slightly higher than the average amount of students' uptake in Jill's class (M = 1.00, SD = 1.15). Overall, the results showed that 70% (M = 0.88, SD

= 1.36) of all uptakes across both sections was successfully implemented into students' subsequent draft. In James' class, students were successful in revising their mechanics at an impressive rate of 100% (*M* = 1.50, *SD* = 1.73); however, in Jill's class, students' successful uptake was significantly lower, at the rate of 25% (*M* = 0.25, *SD* = 0.50). The percentage of unsuccessful students' uptake in Jill's class was 25% (*M* = 0.25, *SD* = 0.50), with a high percentage of revision attempts that were completely different from the teacher's intention at the rate of 50% (M = 0.50, SD = 1.00).

Table 16

Students' Uptake on Mechanics

Instructors	Total Uptake		Successful Uptake		Unsuccessful Uptake		Not Follow	
	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%
James	1.50/1.73	60%	1.50/1.73	100%	-	-	-	-
Jill	1.00/1.15	40%	0.25/0.50	25%	0.25/0.50	25%	0.50/1.00	50%
Average	1.25/1.39	4%	0.88/1.36	70%	0.13/0.35	10%	0.25/0.71	20%

Citation. Table 17 shows that 12% (*M* = 2.67, *SD* = 3.82) of all student uptake was on citation, and 97% (*M* = 2.58, *SD* = 3.68) of all uptakes across both sections was successfully implemented into students' subsequent drafts. All feedback offered to students on citation during Jill's conferences was successfully implemented by the students. The percentage of student successful uptake in James' class was slightly lower than Jill's, which was calculated at the rate of 97% (*M* = 4.83, *SD* = 4.17), with a low percentage of revision attempts that were completely different from the teacher's intention, at the rate of 3% (*M* = 0.17, *SD* = 0.41).

Table 17

Students' Uptake on Citation

Instructors	Total Uptake		Successful Uptake		Unsuccessful Uptake		Not Follow	
	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%	Mean/SD	%
James	5.00/4.34	94%	4.83/4.17	97%	-	-	0.17/0.41	3%
Jill	0.33/0.52	6%	0.33/0.52	100%	-	-	-	-
Average	2.67/3.82	12%	2.58/3.68	97%	-	-	0.08/0.29	3%

Vocabulary. There was no evidence of vocabulary uptake in Jill's class since she did not provide feedback on vocabulary during the conferences. The results revealed that of all the feedback that was given to students on vocabulary, 75% was successfully implemented into the subsequent draft, with only 25% of unsuccessful student uptake. There was no evidence of uptake that was completely different from the teachers' intentions.

Audience. Overall, it appears that most students successfully took up the uptake on audience; 80% of student uptake in James' class was successfully incorporated, while 100% of student uptake on audience in Jill's class was successfully revised. The rate of unsuccessful uptake on audience in James' class was 20%. There was no attempted revision that was completely different from the teachers' intentions.

Discussion of Students' Uptake on the Subsequent Draft. Previous studies have examined the relationship between teacher feedback and students' revisions (Hyland, 1998; Paulus, 1999; Truscott & Yi-ping Hsu, 2008; Williams, 2004). Many researchers confirmed that

teacher feedback did have a high impact on the types of revisions students made. The results in this present study also demonstrated that most of the time students revised their drafts following the instructor's comments. However, there were times when the revisions were different from the instructor's primary intention, meaning that students did not take up the teacher's feedback into their subsequent drafts. As a result, for the purpose of this study, uptake is defined as an attempt on behalf of students to try to revise their draft by following the feedback they receive from the teacher (Loewen, 2004; Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

The results of this study revealed that most of the feedback students received during the one-on-one writing conference resulted in student uptake in their subsequent drafts. Teachers' comments on topic sentence, paragraph order, formatting and style, and audience resulted in 100% uptake. When considering both sections, the rate of successful uptake on content was 80%, and on organization was 84%. The rate of successful uptake on content and organization was high when compared to the rate of successful uptake on vocabulary (75%), mechanics (70%), and grammar (64%). The findings contradict with many previous studies, in which it was found that students were more successful in revising their small-scale errors such as grammar and mechanics rather than the large-scale errors such as content and organization (Ashwell, 2000; Paulus, 1999; Telceker & Akcan, 2010).

The results of the current study can be explained in various ways. First, it is possible that students in this present study realized that the focus of the essay was on the argument structure with 15% of their grade on body structure, 45% on body content (audience, claims, evidence, analysis, audience appeals, and counterargument), 10% on formatting and only 5% on grammatical issues. With a heavy percentage of their grade on content and organization and a small percentage on grammar, it can be the reason why students in both sections paid the most

attention to content and organization and performed successful uptake in these areas. Considering that this is a high-level college composition class, it is necessary for both instructors and students to pay the most attention to ideas and essay structure rather than grammar and mechanics issues. This current study corresponds with Ferris' (1995) and Gilliland's (2014) study, suggesting that in some classroom contexts, students take up more feedback related to content rather than language. As mentioned in the CO150 college composition class, it is important for students to focus on rhetorical strategies so that they could apply these strategies across other genres in their field. Also, since a high-level college composition class often serves as a critical thinking class, it is understandable why many composition instructors put a greater emphasis on aspects other than grammar.

Second, these findings might also be explained by the fact that students and instructors shared the same expectation towards writing conferences. As mentioned earlier, the instructors' concentration was on higher-level concerns and students' expectation was for their instructor to focus on content and organization. This could be the reason why students in this study successfully took up the teacher's feedback on content and organization rather than grammar and vocabulary. As Hyland (2003) mentions, students' use of teacher feedback could be affected by their "individual goals and preferences" (p. 223). Since students in this present study preferred feedback on higher-level concerns and shared the same goals with their instructors, it is likely that they would pay the most attention on these aspects when revising their drafts.

Furthermore, when looking at students' uptake, the results show that students' successful uptake on content and organization could result from the collaboration that occurred between both interlocutors during conferences. Most of the time, students and teachers in this present study collaborated with each other; they usually discussed about the ideas relating to the topic of

student's essay and how to add more information to the texts. Student presented his/her idea and teacher responded to that idea and gave more information on how to develop that discussion. This is seen in example 1, where James and his student discussed solutions for eating disorders in the U.S.

Example 1: Conversations resulting in successful uptake

Student: "So, what do you think my thesis should be like?"
James: "So, the counterargument is important to you and you incorporate to your thesis..."
Student: "And they cause problems. They cause problems to the students and they might cause problems to government. That's why you should consider this."
James: "So, a thesis in this type is a problem-solution. You could say the problem and here my solution is and why we should do it. So, you say, 'even though students thought it's a big issue, you should fix it because of many reasons.'.... So, a good way to make it more effective and improve your length is going to be, to make this more specific…"
Student: "There was one I put in, or maybe after. I don't know where I put in. One in New York and there was like they did a survey."
James: Great! Okay. 'We still like them to offer fresh and healthy food', this probably comes at the end of your counterargument…'

As the conversation above shows, the interaction largely centers on the discussion of thesis statement and idea placement. On student's first draft, she wrote "Many students start developing eating disorders in college, this is why I believe you should start out by improving quality of foods in the dining halls." However, after the conference, she took up the teacher's comments and revised her draft saying, "Many students start developing eating disorders in college, this is why I believe you should start out by improving quality of foods in the dining halls. Even if students like junk food, they need to know it is bad for their health and the government should try make campus a healthier place by offering fresh food, banning free refills and offering free counseling." Her revision shows that she was successfully took up the feedback into her subsequent draft. Plausible explanations could be that this student actively participated in the conference, and was eager to talk about her writing.

This finding corresponds with Goldstein and Conrad (1990) who claimed that when the negotiation had taken place during the conference, all students performed a higher percentage of successful revisions. In contrast, when students did not negotiate meaning, they tended to make revisions mainly on small-scale or sentence-level issues.

Student's unsuccessful uptake on content and organization can be seen on students' drafts who came to the conference less prepared than others. For example, on one student's first draft, he only had his introduction, and a list of sub-headings of the overall essay. During the conference, his instructor commented,

> When you talk about consumer spending, that's a concern of the government. It's the concern of people who work in finance and economics. However, if you're talking to students themselves, you probably want to frame that same discussion in terms of their own personal buying power (Transcript, 2016).

Although the instructor made a clear suggestion on how to improve the draft, the student still failed to incorporate that feedback into his draft. He included information relating to a budgeting profile which was not relevant to the rest of his paragraph.

In addition, it is important to note that students in James' class showed more successful revisions on content, organization, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary than students in Jill's class. A possible explanation could be that most students in James' class brought in a full rough draft to the conference; which made it easier for them to apply the feedback they received from the conference into their subsequent revisions. For example, students could easily refer to the specific sentence or specific paragraph that was mentioned during the conference as needing revisions, and revise those following the instructor's feedback. In contrast, the revision process could be difficult for students who brought in a detailed outline to the conference since the feedback tended to be more general; the instructor could not specifically tell the student, where in the essay, the examples or the ideas they were discussing should be mentioned.

As a result, students might face some difficulties in applying the feedback in their subsequent revisions.

Overall, the results suggest that participating in the conference with a full rough draft could result in more successful revisions. Most of the students in James' class came to the conference with a completed first draft, and they were ready to discuss about their writing, the rate of successful uptake on content and organization was higher than those in Jill's class, at an impressive rate of 86% and 85%, respective. However, students from Jill's class only showed the rate of successful uptake in those areas at 71% and 81%, respectively. This shows that well-prepared students will be more successful in revising their drafts than unprepared students after receiving teacher oral feedback.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Overall, this study attempted to investigate 1) students' expectations towards writing conferences, 2) types of feedback students received during the one-on-one writing conferences, and 3) students' uptake in subsequent drafts. In general, students in this study had high expectations in these four areas: (1) the conference will be worth their time; (2) the instructor will focus on content and organization; (3) the conference will make them feel that their instructor care about them as an individual; and (4) the conference will motivate them to stay on task and do their coursework. Although this study did not investigate teacher's explicit and implicit feedback as well as negotiation framework, which would help analyze why students in this study took up the feedback on content and organization into their subsequent drafts the most, it does prove that ESL learners are more concerned about their content and essay structure over grammatical issues, and they could successfully take up the feedback in these two areas into their subsequent drafts. This study debunks the belief that ESL instructors should focus on grammar and vocabulary when giving feedback to their learners. However, it is important to note that even though students tend to pay the most attention towards content and organization, small-scale errors should not be ignored since teacher's comments on both content and form could help improve students' end products and students could receive "more accuracy-oriented feedback throughout the writing process" (Ferris, 1997, p. 333).

In light of these findings, there are several important implications, which are discussed below. This is followed by limitations of this present study and ideas for future research.

Implications

There are several pedagogical implications from the findings of the present study. The first thing to consider is that prior to the conference, students should be informed of what they

are expected to do during the one-on-one discussion since students from different cultural backgrounds can have different perspectives towards personal interaction with their teacher. It is important to introduce them what the conference discourse is and how it differs from classroom discourse where teacher is the one who has control over the conversation. Letting students know that their voice is important and they are allowed to ask questions and initiate the conversations whenever they want could increase students' confidence in talking to the instructor, and it could motivate them to speak their thought, knowing that their instructor is willing to help them become a stronger writer. This could also make students feel comfortable to discuss their writing with the instructor, which in turn, could result in more successful revisions.

Furthermore, to increase students' understanding of the teacher's feedback, it is important that students and teachers share the same expectations towards the writing conference. The values of the writing conference should be clear in the beginning for the whole class. Teachers should make it clear to the students regarding what they would like to focus on during the conference and what they expect from the students so that students can prepare themselves prior to the conference. Also, students should let their teacher know what they expect to get from the conference. Sharing the same expectations could result in a successful writing conference since both interlocutors will focus on the same topics; they will not jump from one topic to another. By doing this, the conference would be more focused and meaningful, which in turn, could result in more successful revisions.

Additionally, instructors should make writing conferences a regular part of the curriculum. A writing conference could be useful when instructors want to provide specific feedback and specific examples, which could not be given through end or marginal comments. For example, during the conference, instructors could provide feedback with an explanation or

specific example to guide students throughout their writing process. As Sachse-Brown and Aldridge (n.d.) mentioned, feedback should be "specific in its nature as to what learners has done well and what they need to work on next" (p. 3). Providing specific feedback will make it easier for students to implement the feedback and could make them become more productive writers knowing what and how to make revisions.

Finally, ESL writing instructors may have to be patient and respect students' silence during the conference. Oftentimes, ESL learners tend to remain silent for a while to think about what they want to say. As Karim and Shah (2008) pointed out, international students tend to be silent in language classrooms because of their limited knowledge in English proficiency and teacher's control over the conversations. Since English is not their first language, some students who are not familiar with English speaking culture might need some time to process their thought and translate the language into English. As Jacob and Karliner (1997) stressed, writing instructors should "…be able to recognize the point at which all talk about sentences, paragraphs, and diction should stop and the student should spend his time generating thoughts" (p. 504). As a result, it is important for ESL writing instructors to understand this situation and give students a few minutes before continuing the conversation. To decrease students' silence, instructors could create a comfortable environment where students feel at ease and feel that their instructor is not judging their language proficiency, but is there to help them improve their English skills.

Limitations

As with any study, there are several limitations to the research conducted in the present study. The first limitation concerns the sample size of participating students. Since the sample size is relatively small, with only 29 students participating in the pre- and post- conference

surveys, and 27 students attending the conference, conclusions drawn from the study could be limited to this group of students.

A second limitation was that having the instructors collect the surveys could have an impact on students' responses. Some students might be aware of their survey rating and were afraid that it could affect their grade; therefore, this situation could result in a high rating in pre- and post- conference surveys.

A third limitation was students' preparation. Having some students bring in their first drafts, while others only bring in their outlines for their conferences may not fully represent the types of feedback students received during the conference and their uptake in college composition classes. As discussed in the previous chapter, the focus of the revisions would be more specific when the students prepared and brought in their full draft to the conference. Therefore, students' preparation prior to the conference could have an impact on the types of feedback they would receive during the conference and the way they implemented the feedback into their subsequent drafts.

Finally, considering the locations where the conferences were held, James' conferences took place in his office, with a quiet and personal environment, while Jill's conferences were held in the study areas where lots of students were talking and walking around. Different locations can have an impact on students' participation during the conference. Students in James' conferences could be more focused than students in Jill's conferences since being in an instructor's quiet office provides a more suitable study environment and less distraction. Therefore, it would have been better if all conferences were held in a quiet space.

Ideas for Future Research

Since this study employed a limited sample size, future research could use a larger sample size in order to determine whether the results from this study can be generalized. In addition, with the limited time in collecting the data, future research could further examine whether the conference helps students improve their writing over a period of time. Longitudinal research, conducted within one semester, could help determine some changes or developments in students' characteristics after they attend many conferences over a semester.

Furthermore, although the results of this study confirmed that the one-on-one conference did help students improve their draft, it is also interesting to look at a new piece of writing for each genre that students produce over a semester to examine to which degree writing conferences play a role in students' writing skills. Different writing genres can help determine whether the feedback students receive through the conference help improve their writing skills in later writing situations, or whether students' familiarity with the topic is the main factor for them to create a better writing. Different genres might impact students' ability to write since some students might be unfamiliar with the characteristics of a specific genre, which could result in the difficulty in responding to teacher's feedback (Jiuliang, 2014).

Moreover, future research could look at students' primary reasons of why they take up the teacher's feedback on one issue, such as the feedback on thesis statement, but not another issue. Knowing students' primary reasons behind each uptake will help writing instructors create a more successful writing conference. Students could help explain why some feedback is useful and easy to follow, and why they could not take up some suggestions into their subsequent drafts. Do they ignore certain feedback or the feedback is not specific enough, making it difficult to implement? Knowing students' primary reasons behind each uptake will help answer these

questions and instructors could also learn from the students' answers in order to increase the effectiveness of the conference.

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APPENDIX A: CONFERENCE PREPARATION SHEET

The inquiry question that led you to your thesis statement.

Why this issue is of importance to you.

An identification of your audience that explains the value you share and do not share, plus what needs your audience has that you will address in your argument.

How you are using logos, ethos, and pathos.

Your evaluative criteria.

Outline

Your complete thesis

Your reason

Your evidence

Your interpretations/explanations

Your alternative perspectives

An identifiable structure

APPENDIX B: DEMPGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Part I

Name: _____

Sex: _____ Male _____ Female

Age: _____

Native country: _____

Native language(s): _____

Academic level: _____ Freshman _____ Sophomore

_____ Junior _____ Senior

_____ Other (please indicate)

TOEFL/IELTS score (optional): _____

How long have you been in the English-speaking countries (including U.S.A.)?

_____

Part II

If you took writing classes before, what feedback did you receive in your previous writing courses?

_____ Peer feedback

_____ Written feedback from the teacher

_____ Individual student-teacher writing conference

_____ Group student-teacher writing conference

_____ Other (please indicate)

APPENDIX C: PRE-CONFERENCE SURVEY

Indicate your opinions about the following statements using the scale below:

(5) = Strongly Agree, (4) = Agree, (3) = Neutral, (2) = Disagree, and (1) = Strongly Disagree

Survey Questions	**Strongly Agree (5)**	**Agree (4)**	**Neutral (3)**	**Disagree (2)**	**Strongly Disagree (1)**
I think the conference will worth my time.					
The conference will make me feel that my instructor cares about me as individual.					
The conference will help me develop my writing skillS.					
The conference will help me develop my reading skillS.					
During the conference, I'm expecting my instructor to focus on grammars.					
During the conference, I'm expecting my instructor to focus on content and organization.					
The conference will motivate me to stay on a task and do my coursework.					
The conference will help me understand course content I do not understand in class.					
The conference will help me learn about other resources.					

The amount of time I spent on homework for this course will increase because of the conference.					
During my conference, I will be able to ask questions that I won't be able to ask during class time.					
The level of my engagement in the course materials will increase because of my conference.					
I think the conference is an important part of my learning in this course.					

Any questions or concerns should be directed to the researcher, Karanrat Ritthirat, at karant.rit@gmail.com. Thank you for your cooperation. I greatly appreciate it.

APPENDIX D: POST-CONFERENCE SURVEY

Indicate your opinions about the following statements using the scale below:

(5) = Strongly Agree, (4) = Agree, (3) = Neutral, (2) = Disagree, and (1) = Strongly Disagree

Survey Questions	**Strongly Agree (5)**	**Agree (4)**	**Neutral (3)**	**Disagree (2)**	**Strongly Disagree (1)**
I felt that the conference was worth my time.					
The conference made me feel that my instructor cared about me as individual.					
The conference helped me develop my writing skills.					
The conference helped me develop my reading skills.					
During the conference, my instructor focused on grammars.					
During the conference, my instructor focused on content and organization.					
The conference motivated me to stay on task and do my coursework.					
The conference helped me understand course content I did not understand in class.					
The conference helped me learn about other resources.					

The amount of time I spent on homework for this course increased because of the conference.					
During my conference, I was able to ask questions that I would not be able to ask during class time.					
The level of my engagement in the course materials increased because of my conference.					
I felt that the conference was an important part of my learning in this course.					

Any questions or concerns should be directed to the researcher, Karanrat Ritthirat, at karant.rit@gmail.com. Thank you for your cooperation. I greatly appreciate it.

APPENDIX E: PRE- CONFERENCE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (STUDENTS)

Most of the questions will base on students' responses on the pre-conference survey. The questions are designed to clarify students' responses. The questions include but are not limited to:

- What would you like to discuss with your instructor during the conference?
- Do you think the conference will help you improve your draft?
- How do you feel right now? Do you feel nervous to talk to the instructor alone?
- From your response, you disagreed that the conference will motivate you to stay on a task. Could you please tell me what made you feel this way?

APPENDIX F: PRE-CONFERENCE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (INSTRUCTORS)

The questions are designed to find out teacher's expectations towards the conference. The questions include but are not limited to:

- Cloud you please briefly describe your teaching background?
- Do you have a particular pattern in doing the writing conference? How are you going to organize your conference?
- Speaking of the one-on-one conference, what do you expect most from your students?
- What is the most important thing that you would like to discuss with your students in the conference?
- During the conference, do you think you are going to focus more on grammar than content issues? Why?
- Do you think your students will prepare the questions for the conference?

APPENDIX G: POST-CONFERENCE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (INSTRUCTORS)

The questions are designed to find out teacher's perceptions towards the conference. The questions include but are not limited to:

- How do you feel about all the conference? Do you think your students prepared themselves before participating in the conference?
- Do you think you used any strategies to enhance students' understanding?
- Do you think you used different approach towards different students during the conferences?
- What topics did you focus most during the conferences?

APPENDIX H: A CODING SCHEME

Level	Coding and explanation	Examples
C = Content	Cc = Clarity or understandability	"What do you mean here?"
	Cd = Development or lack of development	"These are the same ideas as in the summary."/ "You are repeating points made earlier."
	Ca = Accuracy of information, truth value of a claim, accuracy of interpretation	"This is a misinterpretation of the text."/ "You misunderstood the idea."
	Ce = Example	For example, you can say "I, for example, have practiced until this time. Here on my dining options at CSU, it's just not good enough."
	Ct = Counterargument	

Level	Coding and explanation	Examples
O = Organization, Coherence, Cohesion	Otr = Transition	
	Oth = Thesis statement	
	Oto = Topic sentence	
	Osub = Sub – heading	
	Och = Coherence, cohesion	"Connect these ideas to convince the reader."
	Op = Idea placement	"This belongs at the end of the paragraph."
	Oo = Paragraph order	"The rhetorical analysis paragraph is missing/should be placed first."
	Oq = Quote introduction	"It would be much better if you can say 'researcher says' to introduce a quote."

Level	Coding and explanation	Examples
Form Level		
V = Vocabulary	Vw = Word choice, collocations, phrasing	"This is not the right word for what I think you're trying to say."
G = Grammar/ Syntax and Morphology	Gs = Sentence structure Go = Omission (e.g., subject) Gw = Word order Gv = Verb tense or form Gn = Noun form Gart = Article Gagr = Agreement Gp = Prepositions Gpron. = Pronoun	

M = Mechanics	Mp = Punctuation
	Ms = Spelling
	Mf = Formatting and style
	Ma = Abbreviation

Ci = Citation	Cipage = Page citation
	Cia = Author tag
	Ciart = Article Citation
	Ciat = Attribution and credibility
	Cih = Hanging indent
	Cip = Publication date
Au = Audience	